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Vernet's paintings in the Salon of 1767". Professor Fried envisages the eighteenth-century artist as living in a pure void, divorced from social, literary, or political influences, and preoccupied only with his relationship with the beholder of his paintings. This may well be true, and too much may have been made of the apostolic case, which imagines the painter as part of his times, acted upon by the thought of his times, and very frequently responding to the spirit of his times.

If the latter case is well served, it is because it contains most of the facts that can be established and because it is the historian's task to establish facts and, if possible, to interpret them. Fried has chosen a much more difficult task, and one which no-one living today may be able to perform, or to substantiate: he has decided to investigate motives which are never made explicit, reactions which are never described, theories (such as the fragments of Diderot's theory quoted) which may or may not have been in the public domain and therefore consciousness, and high points of style which were in fact subject to the fluctuations of the painter's own change of heart or the solicitations of experiment.

For the painting of eighteenth-century France is various and bewildering, concerned with ostentatious or semi-ostentatious (Rococo), the impact of teachings from abroad (Neo-Classicism) and the desire of individual artists to make new

syntheses out of disparate modes. The most powerful single general movement is towards a tighter unity of the figure subject and a desire to endow it with the moral significance that it formerly possessed in the works of Poussin. To imply, as Fried does, that painters like Grouze and David, who were dominated by the idea of significance, should try to achieve this by "obliviating" the spectator (for whom the lesson was intended) is a brave but partial undertaking. Even the criticism of Diderot, so apparently polysyllabic, can be shown to have been written with the idea of participation, reified as dialogue, in mind.

It is therefore particularly speculative to build an entire case on a reaction which cannot be tested, namely the reaction of the contemporary spectator, and the motive, that of the contemporary painter, which remains undisclosed. Moreover, to make claims that this line of argument will bring one to the essential truth about mid-eighteenth-century painting in France is to manipulate the reader much as Fried proposes that the painter manipulates the beholder. It is a marvelous idea, but it remains on idea: it is not yet proven. But as Professor Fried intends to take it further (he instances the victims on Géricault's "Kali of the Medusa" who proffer to attract the attention of the brig Argus rather than solicit that of the spectator) it is to be hoped that we will be given the opportunity to test his idea once more on a future occasion.

The academic side

By Joseph Rykwert

DONALD DREW EGBERT,
The Beaux-Arts Tradition in French Architecture
Illustrated by the Grands Prix de Rome
Edited by David Van Zanten
217pp. with 36 black-and-white illustrations.
Princeton University Press: £12.60 (paperback, £7).
0 691 03943 7.

This is a sad book: the last work of a gifted and important teacher which could have been better. To start with the author, Donald Drew Egbert taught History of Art at Princeton from 1929 until 1970, when he retired; in the same year he published his best known book, *Social Radicalism in the Arts*. Although he died three years later, for a long time he had also been working on this present book. The earlier work was successful partly because it appeared positively modern in 1970, when the theme of *The Beaux-Arts Tradition in French Architecture* would have seemed quite contrary. The Ecole des Beaux-Arts, which was to become the focus of discontent in 1968, had been identified as the enemy of whatever was best in architecture in the early years of the century, and had shown an obstinate unwillingness to renew itself. This of course led to the violent break in 1968, when it was subdivided first into six, then eight, and finally into twelve departments. The *Beaux-Arts* tradition, how the shades of its enemies from Labrousse to Corbusier must have laughed!

Since Egbert's death a violent but foreseeable reaction set in, and by now the new book appears equally modern. Since there are too few painters and sculptors to produce drawings to satisfy collectors, the art market has turned also to architects (or to popular celebrities). Now the elaborate drawings required from the students of the Ecole used to culminate in schemes of monumental public buildings (occasionally for private buildings, prepared for a competition whose winner was not only ensnared of some years at the French Academy in Rome (hence the competition was simply referred to as the "Prix de Rome") but of a series of government commissions on his return. The competition therefore dominated the years of student training which would lead up to it, indeed dominated the French architectural profession. The Academy catered for painters and sculptors and engravers. The intention of its founders, Louis XIV and Colbert, was to institute a system of training and professional organization which would replace and exalt the old guild system - while placing it securely within the control, because under the patronage, of the crown. The system worked well enough under the ancien régime: most of the time the prize went to memorable architects, even if some of the best (the Gabriels, Ledoux) did not compete, and did

Egbert's book will remain useful as a directory: the list of the Prix-de-Rome winners and the illustrations alone would make it worth keeping. The text outlines the development of the architectural section of the Beaux-Arts. It contains lapses: Durand's conception of form was anything but free; in the 1820s and 1830s *connaissance* certainly did not mean convention in our sense; Duban may have been the first teacher in the Ecole to talk about a "national character" or length, but since Philibert de l'Orme (and particularly in the eighteenth century) French architects have talked incessantly about the Frenchness of their architecture. The whole section about the principles and methods illustrated by the projects could have been omitted to the book's advantage. Egbert would have been better served by his editor, David van Zanten, if editorial control had been more ruthless: since editing and publishing this book was something of a work of piety, it could also have been extended with an account of how students went to Rome before the institution of the competition, and how the early prizewinners fared.

But then, *démocratie*... Egbert was much loved, as is clear from the memoir by David van Zanten and the tribute from Robert Venturi: why do I bother to speak ill of him and the book which occupied his last years? Only because it has, I feel, been so carefully trimmed to cater to the new vogue for the grandiose architectural drawing - and even more for beauty and the rules seemed unchanging. But they only ever seemed so. And the historian of the institutions which embody the mother of the arts must, I feel, be extremely sensitive to any such changes: nor should he sell his contemporaries short by failing them into the belief that you can get by with such shiny notions. If there is a classical tradition to be isolated in architecture it must be both a much more turbulent, and much grander thing than is presented by this book.

Starting from the facts

By Frances Spalding

CHARLES HARRISON:
English Art & Modernism 1900-1939
40pp. Allen Lane. £20.
0 7139 0792 4

English art of this century was much of its initial impulse in the Victorian "subject" picture. Had the late of story-telling in painting not reached such melodramatic pitch and gained such popularity and rewards through the sale of engravings, it is unlikely that early twentieth-century artists would have spun quite so fast in the opposite direction into the arms of abstract art. After the First World War had undermined the confidence and momentum of this initial avant-garde, Wyndham Lewis found his earlier geometries looked "bleak and empty", in need of "filling". With hindsight, extreme modernism seemed a prefiguration of the inhumanity of war; its brittle fragmentation of form seemed a devaluation of subject matter and all its human associations. Art, it was felt, had turned its back on life.

This problem vexed both artists and critics. Paul Nash observed that as his landscapes approached abstraction they suffered a certain impoverishment. Roger Fry, having freed English art from the need for mimetic verisimilitude, spent the last twenty years of his career reconsidering the role of representation. The revival of landscape painting in the 1920s can be seen as a temporary flight from the machine age. It was followed in the 1930s by a reassembling of a new avant-garde who pushed again towards abstraction. To a still younger generation, the abstract art of Nicholson, Hepworth and others looked rarefied end of touch with the worsening political climate. Desiring a wider audience, the young William Coldstream concluded in 1938, "Public art must mean realism".

Such it would seem is Charles Harrison's conclusion at the end of his major study of English art 1900-1939. For him "vivacious representation must entail the reconciliation of technical concerns... with the requirements of realistic description". It therefore comes as a surprise to discover that the heroes in this book are not William Coldstream and his Euston Road School colleagues but Paul Nash and Ben Nicholson. Harrison does not use his conclusion as a formula against which to test each artist discussed: instead he often avoids judgment and settles for a descriptive account. But like Ruskin, his approach is one of high seriousness, purposeful, authoritative and occasionally dogmatic. He brings to this study not only impressive scholarship but also his years of experience as an art critic, an exhibition organizer (of, among other shows, the Ben Nicholson retrospective held at the Tate Gallery in 1969), and as a member of Art Language, the movement in art devoted not to its making but to discourse about the discourse of art. Where this

book differs from its predecessors, notably from Dennis Farr's *English Art 1870-1940*, is in its selectivity and its detailed consideration of the context of ideas surrounding artistic production. It enables the author to perceive, for instance, a mutual radicalism beneath the quarrel between the abstract artists and the Surrealists in the 1930s: the ideal harmony of the former carrying an implicit critique of social inequity and the irrationality of the latter subverting bourgeois concepts of reason and order. If hidden directive, it is "truth to experience", only a very broad interpretation of which could justify Harrison's simultaneous praise of Camden Town social realism and Ben Nicholson's white reliefs.

The subject itself feeds upon paradox and confusion. Charles Harrison uncovers the theoretical incoherence behind modernism in English art, the idealistic reasoning, the adaptation of ideas from Russia and Germany without full understanding of the historical necessities that lay behind their formation. He admits it is unlikely that a unity between theory and practice will exist at any one moment. He warns against the tendency to think simply in terms of reactionaries and progressives, citing Sickert as an example of an artist who straddled the modern and the traditional. Instead, the argument crystallizes into those who upheld the cultural autonomy of art and those who, like Sickert, thought it should be underpinned by reference to the world of "gross material facts".

Autonomy in art is, however, easily over-emphasized for the sake of argument. Harrison takes Whistler as his first representative and reproduces *The Falling Rocket* over the artist's statement that the painting is "an arrangement of line, form and colour first". But what he does not add is that the picture is secondly of Cremorne Gardens at night, a popular pleasure-ground not for London's upper crust but for the lower end of society, and the haunt of prostitutes. Whistler's paintings of Cremorne Gardens, Chelsea backstreets and his etchings of non-tourist moddy received opinion on the subject. As Harrison himself argues, when he actually questions Sickert's statement that the artist should have no preferences, what an artist sees depends on where he goes, and where he goes is to some extent dependent on choice.

Roger Fry's desire for greater autonomy in art brings him, too, under attack. Alert to the unfortunate tendency to confuse Clive Bell's bold assertions with Fry's more qualified thought, Harrison nevertheless falls prey to over-simplification when outlining Fry's position. He accuses him of preserving academic experience as a minority interest. Fry did admit that the aesthetic sensibility in most men was "comparatively weak" but he did not say (as Clive Bell did) that the mass of mankind cannot make aesthetic judgments. He perceived that the self-reliant reality presented by much modern art was at first unsympathetic to an English audience used to regarding painting merely as a starting point for associative rumination. His aim was to purify art of these obfuscating associations.

Harrison is forced to make subtle distinctions between those who harness modernism to expressive, vital purposes and those who allow it to dwindle into an autonomous end in itself. Of the two Vorticists, Lewis and Humberg, the former is praised for transforming human action into an abstract force, while the latter, who attempted to reflect a view of progress based on the concept of class struggle. Judgments like these, so forcefully bowled at the heads of the modern movement, are provocative and challenging even if not always convincing.

One recurrent dilemma facing the artist was how to remain "true to life" while the stylistic emphasis of modernism led towards non-representation. It could be argued that in 1914 Cubism came into its own, finding a subject matter that matched its aggressive treatment. But before long the war-artists felt obliged to modify their avant-garde styles in order to convey more information about their subject. The Cubist element that remained in the work of William Roberts is criticized by Harrison as "a habit of formalization rather than a process of critical transformation". Artistic progress did not always fit with the realistic demands of the subject, and in the confused post-war period the author is quick to draw attention to "pseudo-liberalism", the waning of principles of tolerance in the absence of theory.

Where this book makes its most substantial contribution to the history of English art is in its treatment of the inter-war period. Charles Harrison combines extensive archival research with deeply-considered appreciation as he traces the evolution of the 7 & 5 Society, the formation of Unit One, the brief but condensed career of Christopher Wood and the gradual ascendancy of Moore, Hepworth, Paul Nash and Ben Nicholson. His seriousness of approach, however, narrows his field of vision: Stanley Spencer is too unsophisticated for his taste and Lowry is never mentioned. He tends to evaluate painting or sculpture according to the intellectual demands made upon the spectator. Predictably, he admires Nash for his articulate handling of unsensational subjects and Nicholson for, among other things, his pursuit of an extreme clarity.

With Nicholson's white reliefs of the mid-1930s we reach what is for Harrison the high point in British art in the first half of the century. He draws our attention to both logical development of Cubism, their numismaticity, automatically, their rigorous abstraction as well as their possible debt to the artist's memory of white-painted cottages, studios, architecture and the sunlit snow at Ticino. He also admits their paradox: while being assertively substantial they evoke a world in which material identity is idealized almost out of existence. They are the ultimate in modernism, refined, remote and revolutionary in that they were seen to reflect a belief in social re-construction. But Geoffrey Grigson, whom Harrison quotes, perceived their limitation: "an image of infinity, ordered by saying 'no' rather than 'yes'... Admire in technical qualities in taste, in severe self-expurgation, but too much 'art itself', floating and disinterested." Like Mondrian's paintings, these reliefs which sought universal expression had no appeal. And in reaction against them, the Euston Road School was founded to produce a realism that would engage a wider public.

Even if the majority of Charles Harrison's evaluations do not differ markedly from those made in previous studies of this period, he makes a provocative and very necessary attempt to separate modernism from its mannerisms: to discern that which is historically specific from that which merely adopts schematic handling to give it a veneer of modernity. The solid achievement this book represents will check the art historian's automatic tendency to regard the abstract as the more advanced. The author reminds his readers that the monumentality of the great French Post-Impressionists rests not only on their formal innovations but also on their choice of traditional, social subjects. By implication, the way forward may involve a return to the heart-tugging appeal of Victorian narrative painting.

The Porter's Vision

Pushing my trolley across Waterloo,
I met another fellow. 'Who are you?'
I ask him friendly-like because his furo
Seemed somehow or other rather out of place
In that great jostling terminus. His face
Wore a smile. He said, 'I'm the Porter.'
Wondering, I questioned him how that could be.
For his gown was not what the Irish Country
Are wont to wear, but more a sort of atreel.
He smiled and spoke in accents passing sweet:
'I met the lines that I once in a passing sweet
Of men. Transfixed by light on the hair:
Upon the cross two thousand years ago
I died.' The vision was gone - and lo,
I found my grimy cap was in my hands.
Brimming with gold as countless as far sands.

James Michie

The Florence Baptistery Doors

Introduction by Kenneth Clark
Photographs by David Finn

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June

April 3 1981

Revolution as melodrama

By George Schöpplin

DAVID IRVING:
Uprising!
One Nation's Nightmare: Hungary 1956
628pp. Hodder and Stoughton, £13.50.
0 340 18313 6

Before setting out to write this book, David Irving had no experience of either Hungarian affairs or of the special problems raised by the nature of communist systems. His acquaintance with Hungary and Hungarian language, was self-evidently slight. One could have expected, therefore, that Irving would have tackled his selected field of research with some care, with some awareness of the potential pitfalls and some recognition that the cultural differences between communist Hungary and the West were both subtle and significant. On all these points, however, Irving's book does not renege. It is fair to say that he fails to do justice to his subject through wilfulness, ignorance and arrogance.

Irving's style is popular journalism at its worst. Chapter 1 opens with the words: "The glass crunches and silences beneath his shoes as he paces upon the polished floor marked 'Minister' with his sub-machine gun." Throughout the book, there is an emphasis on the dramatic or sensational—at times one has the feeling that Irving would much sooner avoid analysis of events altogether. The amount of detail paraded in page upon page has not only made the book miserably long—550 pages of text—but it is also superfluous, included merely for effect, or in an easy way of lending verisimilitude to uncertain sections which would otherwise be unconvincing. Irving's pseudo-dramatic approach relies on the use of the historic present and imaginary scenes. "Rákosi hoisted with laughter. His velvety grey eyes momentarily lost their deceptively benevolent, humane allure..." How does Irving know that while delivering his infamous "salami tactics" speech in 1952, Rákosi "hoisted" and that, for a moment, his eyes lost their deceptive allure? (It so happens that I stood face to face with Rákosi once, just after the war, and I do not remember any kind of allure in his eyes.)

The book is not helped either by the disagreeable manner in which Irving deals with the Jewish aspect of his subject. In a brief "Who was who in Hungary" (pages 13-16) a fair number of persons are labelled "Jewish". The list is inaccurate in places—some of the people who are not described as Jewish were Jewish and at least one person whom Irving calls Jewish was not Jewish. He says of Rákosi that he "had all the tact of a kosher butcher": why? Are kosher butchers notoriously or even self-evidently less tactful than non-kosher butchers? Indeed, do butchers by definition epitomize tactlessness? The implication is, I think, clear. Later in the book, Irving puzzlingly describes someone as an "ex-Jewish student". It is hard to avoid the conclusion that, for Irving, all Jews in Hungary have to be labelled as such. In order to limit particular qualities that they purportedly possess—as far as Irving is concerned, these qualities are negative ones.

This attitude plays an important role in his interpretation of the Hungarian events as a whole. Put very simply, his argument is that Hungarian communism was the creation of Jews, and that the 1956 events were anti-communist and therefore anti-Jewish. This is a misleading oversimplification. The interrelationship of the non-Jewish majority of Hungarians, Communism, the Left, the Soviet Union and communist Jews as well as non-communist Jews is one of enormous complexity, and sensitivity. Irving is seemingly reluctant to confront it and to undertake the necessary deeper analysis of a long historical process; to look for instance at the nature of Jewish assimilation in nineteenth-century Hungary and its intimate links with entrepreneurial development; at the emergence of an assimilated middle class and its relationship to the ruling élite; at the association in the minds of many Hungarians, Jews and non-Jews alike, of the 1919 Soviet Republic with Jews and Bolshevism; at the impact of the Holocaust and the re-emergence after 1944 of the remnants of the Jewish community into the troubled era of the communist takeover.

Irving's simple, even crude methodology is applied, in other areas as well. How easily he compresses the convoluted

developments of 1944-45: "... when the first elections were held on November 4, 1945, several parties contended and there was therefore a secret ballot." What is the significance of the "therefore"? Is Irving arguing that a secret ballot was held because there were several parties? If he is—and I cannot see that his words will bear any other construction—he is utterly wrong. It has never been satisfactorily explained why free elections were permitted by the Hungarian CP and the Soviet-dominated Allied Control Commission; but no one has claimed that it was because there were several parties in contention. A more plausible explanation is that the communists and the Soviet Union underestimated their electoral unpopularity and expected wrongly that the Party, or at least the left as a whole, would win a majority.

Irving's ignorance of events and individuals is a source of constant difficulty. He describes Pál János, one of those caught up in the Rákosi purge and an ex-Social Democrat, as "contending for the communists". This alone would be sufficient to disqualify Irving from being taken seriously as a historian of Hungarian affairs. János, a left-revolutionary and Trotskyist sympathizer, was detected by the communists, a feeling he reciprocated, and his role in the Rákosi trial was attributable to this old enmity. Irving says of Cardinal Mindszenty that he was "known for his pronounced anti-Semitic views as Bishop of Veszprém and for failing to protest at the deportation of Jews in 1944—no so US Intelligence report from

Budapest stated confidentially in November 1945". Note the technique used here: Irving seemingly covers himself by attributing his comment to US Intelligence, but one might have expected him to have checked this against other sources of information—not least Mindszenty's own *Memoirs* listed by Irving—and discovered Mindszenty's very respectable record. In describing the proceedings at the Rákosi trial, Irving has Rákosi declare, "My grandfather being of Saxon descent, did spell his name 'Reich'". First, he misquotes the official, English-language record of the trial, where he could have read: "My grandfather being of Saxon descent, wrote his name as Reich". Second, Irving obviously does not realise that the reference is not to Saxony, but to Transylvania—Rákosi's family was of Transylvanian Saxon origin.

Irving is concerned to show that the events of 1956 were not a revolution but an uprising, that its leader Imre Nagy was an unrepentant *apparatchik* not much better than his predecessors and that the whole affair was little more than an accident. In this connection he uses a statement by Trotsky to the effect that a mass movement which has no clear aims, "deliberate methods of struggle" or leadership, is only an insurrection. Yet even on Irving's own evidence, October 1956 amounted to something more than an uprising.

The aims of the revolution were clear enough—the creation of a political system capable of meeting the challenge of mass politics through institutional democracy.

This could be seen in the demands of the various student groups, the writers and, above all, in the pygmies of the workers' councils which sprang up spontaneously in industrial centres throughout Hungary. On the question of "deliberate methods of struggle", Irving fails to understand that because events moved so rapidly in 1956—entailing both the disintegration of the Party as a ruling force and the radicalization of the people—no clear-cut one could have been developed in the time available. In effect, the chief weapon became the street demonstration. The weakness of Nagy's leadership is, of course, very evident, but he did have ideas of the kind of political change he wanted and the kind of society he would have liked Hungary to have become. But he lacked the personality and character to put his ideas into effect.

That did not however make him into a typical communist functionary. Irving disqualifies himself from pursuing judgment on Nagy's ideas by his admission that he finds Nagy's writings incomprehensible. If he had been capable of understanding Nagy's admittedly tortuous prose he might have discovered that much of his thinking possessed an originality and freshness which had been applied in Hungary, might have saved that country many of the travails of Stalinism.

One of the most extraordinary passages comes on page 215, where Irving writes: "One squall of rain, one gust of biting autumn cold [sic], would have driven these crowds home. It might all never have happened." The passage refers to the events of October 23, when enormous crowds

took to the streets of Budapest and started the revolution. Irving spends much time in describing the pent-up frustrations of years of repression and deprivation endured by the majority of Hungarians and then ignores everything he has positively said in concluding that the weather might easily have affected the revolution.

From this book Irving emerges as a pamphleteer [it is a very long pamphlet, to be sure], who shows neither imagination nor responsibility towards his subject. His human figures are not drawn in black and white, but only black—there is not one person in the book about whom Irving has anything positive to say. There is no excuse of any attempt to understand either Hungary or the Hungarian people. The book is poorly organized, often confused and relies heavily on melodramatic叙述. It has little to add to our knowledge and nothing to our understanding of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.

Local Politics in Communist Countries (230pp. The University Press of Kentucky, \$17.50, 08131 1398 9) is a collection of essays by eight specialists who have "addressed themselves to the issues of political participation and policymaking roles at sub-national levels in states where they have done extensive field research". The book is edited by Daniel N. Nelson, who has also contributed an article on "Citizen Participation in Romania: The People's Council Deputy", and a "Conclusion"—"Participation and Policymaking Dilemmas in Local Communist Politics". Among the other articles in this collection are Joel C. Moses' "Local Leadership Integration in the Soviet Union", Jan. F. Tóka and Ana Bărbulescu's "Evaluating Citizen Participation at the Community Level: The Role of Party Affiliation in Yugoslavia", Jaroslav Fiala's "Polish Local Politics in Post-Concentration or Deconcentration", and Victor C. Fülkenheim's "Decentralization and Control in Chinese Local Administration". In his concluding remarks Professor Nelson writes: "In a sense, then, this volume has pointed to dynamic elements of communist politics too often ignored because of the centralist exterior of many communist parties, i.e. those found in the central/local relationship... To be sure, the balance of power is heavily tipped on the side of central institutions and elites. If research such as reported in this volume, says anything, however, it is that the behavior of those central institutions and leaders in communist states will be strongly affected by participatory and policy decisions which arise from local politics, at influence we can ill afford to ignore when we analyze such regimes".



Among this week's contributors

FLEUR ADCOCK's most recent collection of poems, *The Inner Harbour*, was published last year.

COLIN AMERY is the architectural critic of the *Financial Times*, and co-author, with Dan Cruikshank, of *The Rape of Britain*, 1978.

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PAUL BAILEY's novels include *At the Jerusalem*, 1967, and *Old Soldiers*, 1980.

CHRISTOPHER BOOKER's most recent book, *The Games War: A Moscow Journal*, will be reviewed shortly in the TLS.

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PAUL CARTLEDGE is the author of *Spain and Lakonia: A Regional History 300-362 BC*, 1979.

MARTIN CADRELL's *Pacificism in Britain, 1914-1945: The Defining of a Faith* was published last year.

PATRICIA CRAIG's critical study *The Lady Investigator: Women Detectives and Spies in Fiction*, a collaboration with Mary Cadogan, was published in February.

RUSSELL DAVIES is the television critic of the *Sunday Times*.

TOM DISCH's most recent novel is *On Wings of Song*, 1979.

DOUGLAS DURN's new collection of poems, *Six Kids in Parliament*, will be published by Faber later this year.

PETER GREENHAM is Keeper of the Royal Academy Schools. His portrait of F. R. Leavis is in *Downing College*, Cambridge.

ROBERT HEWISON's *In Anger: Culture in the Cold War 1945-50* is reviewed in this week's TLS.

SIMON HORNBLLOWER is a Fellow of Oriole College, Oxford.

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PHILIP MASON's books include *Kipling: the Class, the Shadow and the Fire*, 1975.

JAMES MICHIE's translation of La Fontaine, *Selected Fables*, was published in 1979.

J. MORDAUNT CROOK's *William Burgess and the High Victorian Dream* will be published by John Murray in June.

JANET MORGAN is the editor of Richard Crossman's *Diaries of a Cabinet Minister*, 1976-7, and *The Backbench Diaries of Richard Crossman* which has just been published.

LES A. MURRAY's books include *Selected Poems: The Vernacular Republic*, 1976.

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TOM PHILLIPS's *A Humorous A Treatise of a Victorian Novel* was published last year.

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MICHAEL PODRO's books include *The Moniford in Perfection*, 1972.

RICHARD MAYNE's books include *The European*, 1973, and a translation of Jean Monnet's *Memoirs*, 1978.

S. S. PRAWLIN's books include *Karl Marx and World Literature*, 1967, and *Collier's Children: the Film as Tale of Terror*, 1980.

BENEDICT READ is Deputy Wit Librarian at the Courtoud Institute.

OSAHAM REYNOLDS's books include *A Concise History of Watercolour Painting*, 1972.

SIR JAMES RICHARDS was editor of *The Architectural Review* from 1937 to 1971.

PAT ROBERTS's books include *Henry Ford: A Biography*, 1979.

JOSEPH RYKWERF's most recent book is *The First Moderns: The Architects of the Eighteenth Century*, 1980.

FRANCIS SPALDINO's biography of Roger Fry was published last year.

J. I. M. STEWART's novels include *The Gaudy*, 1974, *The Madonna*, and *Asphodel*, 1977, and *Full Term*, 1978.

GEORGE SCHÖPPLIN is Lecturer in East European Political Institutions at the London School of Economics and the School of Slavonic and East European Studies.

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DAVID TROTTER is the author of *The Poetry of Abraham Cowley*, 1980.

ROBERT HEWISON:
In Anger
Culture in the Cold War 1945-50
230pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, £14.95.
0 297 77890 0

There's nothing so dead as the day before yesterday. Too recent to be history, but too remote for many to remember, it resembles the "skip distance" familiar to radio engineers—beyond the horizon and out of range of direct transmission, but still too close for signals bounced off the ionosphere. As time goes by, however, memory's skip distance shortens. The nostalgia industry feeds ever more greedily on the fairly recent past, and fashions now-adays have scarcely faded before they're revived. Miss the faraway concert? Never mind, it'll soon be a comeback. How long will it take pop musicians to rediscover punk rock, painters to revert to environments and happenings, and clothes designers to extend *la mode retro* so as to include flared jeans?

The decade-and-a-half that followed the Second World War certainly seems due for reevaluation. In many respects, it was the seed-bed of our present world. Our war aims had taught us to be utopian, at home and abroad. National efforts to build a better future soon showed us the impossibility of going it alone, and within five years we established most of today's international institutions. In Germany and Italy, democracy replaced dictatorship. In Eastern Europe, Communist regimes ousted democracy. Europe and the world were both divided by the confrontation between the Soviet Union and the West. Former colonies began to achieve freedom; new world powers flexed their muscles; Western Europeans set out on their quest for unity. Technology brought both wealth and drawbacks, including greater dependence on imported oil. Social change caused tension, as it always led to protest. High noon looked less promising than dawn.

Art and literature, meanwhile, evolved slowly—at least in Britain. The early postwar years continued to celebrate the glamour. The wartime crop of poems and stories, harvested mainly in magazines and the *Penguin New Writing*, seemed now to shiver. Some young writers had died in the war; others, now in "demob suits", may have found that they had less leisure—and duller material—than when they were in uniform. Not until the 1950s, in fact, did new and distinctive voices seem to impose themselves on a jaded literary scene.

Such is the general framework of Robert Hewison's detailed, absorbing, and rather provoking book. His earlier effort, *Under Siege*, was an equally comprehensive but more satisfying survey of literary and artistic life in London during Hitler's war. I felt he'd had fun writing it—mapping, for instance, Fitzroy's network of favourite pubs, and vividly evoking the shabby-bohème atmosphere created by isolation and lack of challenge. In that sense, war-time London was as provincial as wartime Paris, and minor bohémians looked big. As an emblem of the period, Hewison shrewdly praised Julian Maclure-Ross, whose talent was tragically wasted but whose best work, including his Army stories, had enormous life and sparkle. Pascal and alcohol he may have been at the end, but even as a critic and parodist Maclure-Ross deserves a niche in history. *His Memoirs of the Forties* provided the starting-point, and the key-signature, for Hewison's *Under Siege*.

The postwar period has less unity; and with it, in Anger, Robert Hewison's touch seems less sure. His photograph, on the back flap of the dust-jacket, makes him look like a plump-faced, springy-haired, severe-spectacled bird of prey. He claps a box of Ole cards and it is tempting to suppose that a card-index is an important tool of his hovering, pouncing reader. He can certainly snap up choice quotations. Geoffrey Faber, 1948:

"As a nation, or an island group of nations, we have suddenly exchanged riches for poverty, and power for insecurity. This change in our status has come as a reward for our 'finest hour'. Until we have realistically and courageously adjusted ourselves to it, we are not likely to produce very much worthwhile literature."

Kathleen Raine, 1948: "Most of the critical writing of the 1940s has been journalistic—that is, addressed to a public assumed to know less than the author himself." V. S. Pritchett, 1953: "The legend of the literary monopoly [illegally enjoyed by London] is a great consolation in the possession of envy which regularly visits the outskirts of literary society." Penelope Houston, 1955:

Tolerance and trust in compromise, the hallmarks of the English character, work against the 'engaged' artist in any medium; so does that celebrated English custom of ignoring a disagreeable fact, on the assumption that if left alone it may quietly go away. All this means that many areas of experience are closed off to the British film-maker. A no less significant issue, and one affecting the whole picture of life that we are given on the screen, is the intriguing and unmentionable subject of class.

David Sylvester, 1957:

What if [current British art] adds up to is something as remote from the rest of modern painting as British films are from real films. This is largely because it has no sense of attack and earthiness, a sort of stiff-upper-lipped air. So that when we arrive at the far end of Dallery XVIII and come upon two Bratys, which have not got this atmosphere of doing the done thing and please do not spit and gentlemen lift the seat, we feel for the first time that we are looking at paintings, paintings in the ordinary sense of the word.

T.C. Worsley, 1959: "The research begun at the Royal Court—four years ago was 17—has finally been perfected. The English play can now break through the class barrier at will. The objective has been achieved. Now the question is, what is going to be done with the ability?"

My own answer to that question would be: "not much, but quite a lot of state propaganda." Robert Hewison's is: "The plays of Arnold Wesker's trilogy." Oh, well. But many of Hewison's remarks are more to the point—as when he reminds us that 1947 was "the end of the phoney peace". Of *The Confidential Clerk* and *The Elder Statesman* he declares: "By writing in verse Eliot wished to raise the emotional intensity; but elevated speech conflicted with a naturalistic setting, and he progressively toned down the poetic element until it was so camouflaged that there seemed little to be gained from writing in verse at all." On the abortive "new realist" moves in painting, he says: "The little that has been written about British post-war art is so dominated by the arrival of Abstract Expressionism from America in the mid-1950s that it is difficult to appreciate that there was a period between the decline of Neo-Romanticism and the rise of Abstract Expressionism when attempts were made to steer painting in another direction." On 1950s novels about scenes of provincial life in which lucky Jim Olinger may be happy as Larry to escape from under the net, abandon the world's game, and hurry on down the primrose path to join in the breaking of Bamber's forehead, he writes: "Without before finding room of the type 'Without wishing to impose a Freudian reading, it would appear that the intellectual children of the Welfare State were rejecting their parents.' "But," he adds,

there were other factors besides a negative reaction to the ideas of the earlier generation that encouraged a less committed science. Economic factors, meant that it was virtually impossible to live by one's art alone; as a result it was necessary to make some accommodation with the institutions of the Welfare State.

He is equally sharp on Belling comedies: "During the war the image of a socially cohesive and purposeful nation had been acceptable, but the post-war portrayal of a society of bumbling amateurs successfully deflating 'authority' as in *Passport to Purgatory*, the comic-museum view of a Britain of vintage cars, (*Concervere*, 1953), and steam trains (*The Tiffed Thunderbolt*, *Ballad*, 1953) was comforting—and illusory." Hewison also writes well. If in the wake of Irving Wards, on George Devine and the English Stage Company. For anyone wanting a swift reconnaissance of the period, in fact, *In Anger* is quite a useful book.

Earlier, however, I called it "provoking". Why?

One minor reason is its occasional errors and omissions. It misdates, for instance, a quotation from Anthony Huxley. The *Spectator*'s review critic, whom I rather lampooned as a celebrant of "The Move-

ment". It mis-spells Reynet Banham's first name, then gives it as "Roger" in the index. It tucks Alain Tanner, the Swiss film director, into "Alain Turner". It describes Karel Reisz's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* as "inspired from Alan Sillitoe's stories [sic] of working class life". It calls Commander Sir Stephen King-Hall a "right-wing military thinker". Hewison even travesties logical positivism, implying that it was anti-ethical (and perhaps even immoral) as well as anti-metaphysical. More generally, he seems to take at face value facile assertions about "epochs", "progress", and "new generations"—like the metaphor-laden trend-hunter's lament that he quotes from Alan Ross (1951):

The present is a time of disenchantment for the writer. Religious, political and psycho-analytical formulas have lost both their novelty and practical effectiveness. Marxism has deteriorated into a cliché. Western civilization, dead ground between the United States and the totalitarian State, threatens to become a hug. Poets, not unaturally, have become increasingly reluctant to acknowledge any specific descriptive label. The bridges have given way too often, the signposts proved misleading. At the moment there is neither a single major influence over modern poetry nor a contemporary movement.

"It was not until 1953 that a new generation of novelists could be said to have emerged," writes Hewison, and he goes on to enumerate them: P. H. Newby, William Sansom, J. D. Scott, Thomas Hinde, John Mortimer, Doris Lessing, Olivia Manning, Elizabeth Taylor, and Nigel Dennis. What exactly links these writers is hard to judge: even chronologically they cover a wide span. Six of them were first published in the 1940s, and one (Dilvia Manning) in the 1930s; Newby and Sansom had each produced ten books by 1953. Perhaps Hewison's "emerged" is his verbal idiosyncrasy. A little later he declares: "In non-ideological terms, the Movement was reactionary and conservative, and since it actively rejected the idea of the avant-garde it could not lead anywhere, any more than realist painters could develop their art beyond a certain point." Here, the trend-hunter's lament sounds like an accusation. It can surely be no coincidence that one of Hewison's most notable omissions is Wyndham Lewis, whose "Round the Galleries" column in the *Lancet* was required reading at that time. In 1954, Wyndham Lewis published not only a staggering novel, *Self-Condemned*, but also a bombshell of a pamphlet, *The Demons of Progress in the Arts*, which should have put paid for ever to trend-hunter's worship of "the avant-garde".

Trend-hunting, moreover, can lead to serious distortion. *In Anger* is subtitled "Culture in the Cold War". The suggestion is that "the Cold War" decisively conditioned the arts of the period: Hewison actually says as much, several times.

Most British publishers contributed at least one Cold War volume in the following years: novels and broadcasts, leading articles in the serious newspapers and magazines and scare stories in the popular ones, created an atmosphere in which there was safety in conformity, and no encouragement at all to think freely.

That's not the way I remember it. But, fortified with quotations from such partisan witnesses as Doris Lessing and E. V. Thompson, Hewison goes on—and on. "Logical Positivism promoted the ethics of the Cold War." "Creatively frozen by the economic and political conditions of the Cold War, more and more writers found themselves teaching rather than writing English literature." "The persistence of the old names was bound to have a dulling effect on cultural activity already suffering from economic restriction and the pressures of Cold War politics."

The attitudes of the Movement poets reflect the restrictive conditions of the Cold War. . . . The Cold War tended to freeze public attitudes, and counselled silence about private ones. It recommended a guarded private life, in which only small gestures were possible, gestures chiefly about the difficulty of making a gesture. Hence the concern of the Movement poets with the problems of perception and expression.

"Hence?" You could have fooled me. No one I can recall at that time was "restricted", or "guarded", as a result of the Cold War.

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Cold War. There was anxiety, certainly—in 1948 about the Italian elections and the blockade of Berlin, in 1949 about the Soviet nuclear bomb; but there was also a great deal of ribaldry, later, about Joseph McCarthy's book-hunting side-kicks, Colin and Elaine. Deep distrust of Communist intentions wasn't and isn't intellectually disabling; nor need it mean taking political sides. But Hewison seems to find it hard to believe that many aspects of human life are far more important than politics. When Kathleen Raine, referring to Dylan Thomas, evokes "Those feelings which spring from nature and which modern civilization is calculated to deaden and kill", he sneers at her for "gushing". "To renounce politics", he proclaims, "is a political act, and the drift from the Left became a move to the Right." By 1950 the dominant orthodoxy had become conservative, or, if you prefer, "non-political", which often meant reflecting conservative moral and aesthetic views at one remove from political commitment. "While there was considerable emotional support for the sort of criticisms of society that came from the Left, there was little formal commitment; instead there was the general distrust of practical politics that led to the incipient Fascism of Colin Wilson"—whom Hewison has earlier chided for his "reactionary views".

This "lie-that-is-not-with-me-is-against-me" attitude makes the post resemble a bleached-out photograph—dramatic, but over-simplified and crude. It may be due to "the generation gap". Born in 1943, Hewison was still a child when *Henry or Down, Lucky Jim*, and *Look Back in Anger* challenged the blandness of the 1950s. Does this explain, too, his apparent naïveté about the Communist Party and his animus against its opponents? "The British government ordered a purge of Communists from the Civil Service at the beginning of 1948, of which the most prominent victim was the eminent scientist J. B. S. Haldane; a similar prejudice [sic] was felt in academic circles." "In September 1953 *Encounter* was launched as

the house magazine of Conservative intellectual orthodoxy. . . . Indeed, *Encounter* was born middle-aged; the source of its funds was not nearly as significant as the convinced anti-Communism of its people who ran it. *Encounter*'s negative conservatism matched the times."

So let's be clear. In Hewison's book, to be "a-political" is to be "reactionary", perhaps even "Fascist". The Communist Party is as legitimate as any other. To be "anti-Communist" (i.e., pro-freedom and quite likely pro-Labour) is not only to be "conservative" (upper or lower case), but also to be getting on in years. This last, from trend-hunters, is a pretty unanswerable charge.

Not that Hewison, finally, denies his opponents a hearing. He quotes at length, disapprovingly, Noel Annan's faintly partisan praise, in 1955, of Britain's "Intellectual aristocracy"—"accustomed to responsible and judicious interference and sceptical of iconoclastic speculation". He even quotes, with still greater distaste, "Cold War purists of the Movement like Robert Conquest", whose 1958 strictures on "The New Left" seem very apposite today.

The few writers who grapple with great public issues—i.e. who present intolerable over-generalizations instead of realities—are mainly either near-Communists or people who regard everything of which they disapprove as the result of a vast social conspiracy—not to put too fine a point on it, crackpots. The train of thought in political comment is as follows: (1) I am against injustice, (2) therefore I am a socialist, (3) because socialism is the way to prevent oppression any action preserve it is justified, (4) including injustice.

I don't intend to imply that these hard words fit Hewison. Much of his book, as I've said, is very nice. But I do hope that his third volume shows less blatant, left-wing bias. To straggle up and fly right—i.e. truly—culture-vultures need to beat both wings at once.

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A colonial at Covent Garden

By Peter Porter

NELLIE MITCHELL: Melodist and Memoirist
With introduction and notes by John Cargher
253pp. Hamish Hamilton. £8.95.
0 241 104106

Once you have grasped that Edna Everage is the reincarnation of Nellie Melba, you will be able to get more out of this review of the great diva's memoirs. Their twin identity shines across the intervening years. Both superstars became Dames of the British Empire and remain to this day the most famous female Austrians; each has a shadowy, hardly mentioned husband in the background, though Melba was divorced from hers early on; having made her name abroad, each spends her life touring the world and evading Australia to clamorous acclaim; each is on intimate terms with royalty and celebrities of every kind; each personifies that combination of virtuosity, populism and ruthlessness which has made Australian adventurers feared throughout the world.

There is a great deal about Melba as artist which must be taken seriously, but so little of this will be found in her memoirs that it is worthwhile developing more fully the comparison with the still unfaded Dame Edna. Here are a few quotations from Melba's account of her life and adventures. On Edward VII and his court: "How absolutely natural they were, those rulers of England." On being presented to the Royal Box in Brussels after her operatic premiere: "My first Queen! On a legless soldier who had travelled miles and scraped every penny together to hear her in the out-back—'Dear Jim Styles, I am thinking of you— you have the soul of a poet.' On Antipokian life: "Nobody in England or America has any idea of the intensity of the servant problem in the Southern Hemisphere."

Like Dame Edna, Melba is less an artist than a member of that small band identified by the late Ken Tynan as high performance stars. Their art opens doors for them and their democratic beginnings train them in the business of wooing larger audiences. They control their idolatry by alternating the kiss and the scratch. Melba is ecstatic in her memoirs about the de Reszke brothers, Madame Marched, Niklash, Caruso and the leaders of London and Paris society, though we learn nothing about the art of any of the famous names she runs through. Other artists—those who crossed her, or those to whom she owed too much, or simply those she thought no longer mattered—get ungenerous treatment. Poor Sir Lancelotti Ronald and her forgotten flautist-manager, John Lemmon, share

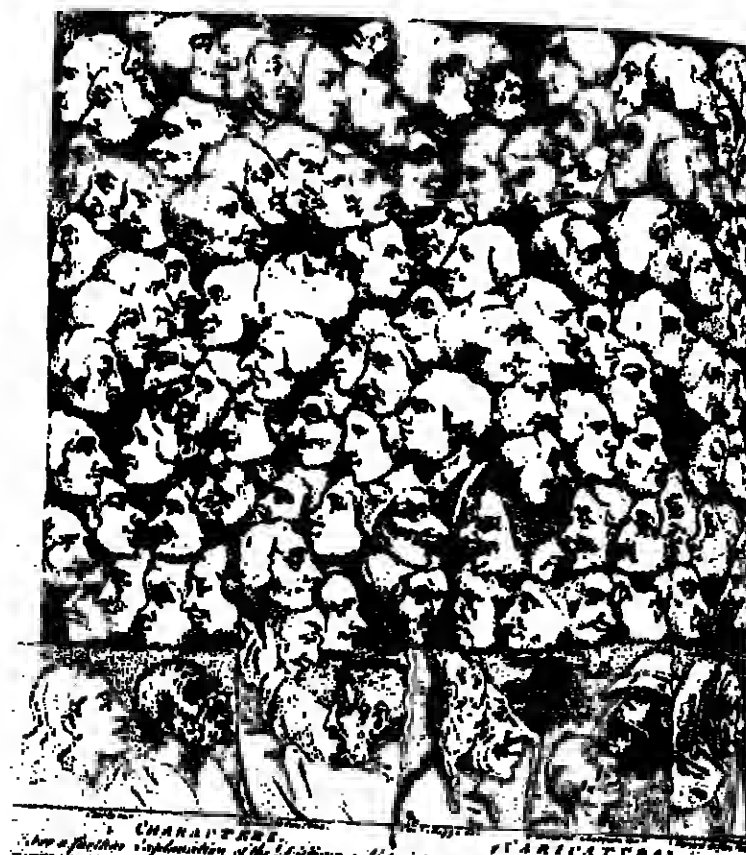
the role of accompanist-kitt to the superstar. Gounod's *Romeo et Juliette* is to her what a bunch of gladiators is to Dame Edna. And her culinary triumphs may well outlast her successors, since the "Pêche Melba" is still with us.

It is hard to know how great a singer Melba was. Her recordings leave you with mixed feelings. They are not good as recorded sound even for their time. As you listen to them, you feel that Melba is holding something back; perhaps she understood instinctively that recording the full personality of an ambassadorial artist. They do establish, however, that she possessed a strikingly pure and accurate voice. Listening to her in "Ah! l'air du" and "Sempere libera" from *Traviata*, one wonders at the superb instinct which guides the refined thread of voice through the delta of difficulty which defeats so many sopranos. Yet many of her contemporaries found her singing cold, and though in her early years on the stage she was a striking and sexually assertive woman, the more discriminating came away from her performances dissatisfied, feeling that they had missed the heart of the composer's intention. It is appropriate that her memoirs, written for an American magazine in 1925, should be published now. One is the age of heartless efficiency and tight-rope-walking virtuosity in music, though this is truer of instrumental than of vocal technique. There is no slither before the public today with Melba's loser-like purity of sound. One has to look to non-musical fellow-Australians, such as Rod Laver, to find perfection like hers.

Melba (née Nellie Mitchell) was born to a family of dispersed Scots. She grew up near Melbourne, married George Armstrong when she was twenty-one and lived briefly in Mackay, Queensland, which is by no means on Athens of the North. She was well-trained in Melbourne by a singing-teacher she chose to neglect in later life the better to encourage the cult of Marchesi, and sailed for London in 1886, at the age of twenty-five. Her training and taste were essentially French, and her early triumphs were in Brussels and Paris. She grasped quickly enough that success in London was a social undertaking, not an artistic one, and she owed her Covent Garden rise to Lady de Grey and an amenable upper-class cabal. Her memoirs chart the speed of her rise to fame and its apparent irresistibility. She remained an operatic superstar for forty years, yet a curiously parochial one, making little impression in Italy and Germany. She writes (wholly without insight) of Puccini and Verdi, but she seldom ventures to La Scala. She has hard things to say about the Italian operatic tradition, and falls to see that in its intellectual way, it embodied a more genuine way of making music than did the French and English modes, with their

Jockey Club expectations and their vague pretentiousness (even as far as Wagner). Melba's memoirs have been edited and sensibly annotated by John Cargher, a familiar voice on Australian radio. From him we hear of her affair with the Duc d'Orléans, something Melba herself never mentions. Nobody should approach her pages looking for musical or even social enlightenment. She rebukes the conservatism of English taste but shows no sign of appreciation of the tallman names she conjures up—Wagner, Chausson, and Ravel. Her sneers at Donizetti come ill from someone who triumphed in *Lucia* and who loved to play in Gounod's operatic warhorses. Perhaps her natural readership will be among Australians, who will want to know how a girl from the colonies made the transition to European greatness. She remained strongly attached to her homeland, and built a baronial mansion for herself outside Melbourne. The most ardent proof of her patriotism remains her stage name. At the height of her success, more people must have known her adopted diminutive than had heard of the city she took it from.

Melba's *My Memoirs* was partly prepared by her secretary and amanuensis, Beverley Nichols, who is his novel *Evening*, published a year after Melba's death, offered a much less cosy picture of her. *Evening* remains a fascinating book, but the old idiosyncrasy of her memoirs has a fascination of their own as well.



Hogarth in this subscription ticket for Marriage à la Mode (1743). "Character and Caricature" refers to a "farther Explanation of the Difference Between Character and Caricature" to the preface to Joseph Andrews in which Fielding commends him highly. The illustration is taken from the book reviewed on page 380.

From memsahib to literary lion

By Philip Mason

VIOLET POWELL: Flora Annie Steel Novelist of India
172pp. Heinemann. £8.50.
0 434 59957 3

Flora Annie Steel left India at the age of forty-two in 1889, the year before Kipling's *anims in India*, when he became a literary lion at twenty-five. If she had died then, she would hardly be remembered or, if at all, only as an English lady unusual for possessing in a high degree qualities not in themselves unusual. She was bossy, opinionated, kind-hearted, incredibly energetic, quite without fear and very intelligent. In her more than twenty years in India she had written newspaper articles, some short stories and an Indian *"Mrs Beeton"* with instructions for British ladies not only on cookery and housekeeping but on first-aid, hygiene, and the obstacles to the domestic cow. And she had started a great many girls' schools and had eventually become inspector of girls' education for the Punjab. All of which was merely to do more of things which quite a number of British wives did in a lesser degree.

But when her husband retired, Flora Annie Steel diverted the main-stream of her energy into writing. Her great success came in 1896, when William Heinemann published *On the Face of the Waters*, a novel about the Indian Mutiny which won immediate applause, both from the critics and the public. She too became a lion and from then till her death, at eighty-two, there was a steady flow of books—novels, both historical and contemporary, short stories and an autobiography, *The Garden of Fidelity*. In 1919, Heinemann had no less than seventeen books by Flora Annie Steel in print.

On the Face of the Waters was her most successful novel, though some have argued that *The Potter's Thumb* was her finest achievement. (It is not!) *On the Face of the Waters* is packed with excitement and adventure: the main plot is based on actual occurrences and cunningly woven into a pattern of other dated historical events. Flora Annie Steel went back to India for her research, lived in the bazaar to get the local detail right, and went through boxes of official correspondence and reports which had lain untouched since 1858.

The book has been called Imperialist, but that is not quite the right word for it; rather, it is partial on both sides. Flora Annie Steel was brilliant, indeed unimpaired, at displaying the grievances of the sepoys and the unease of the public—the

from lack of leadership and common purpose. The whole book is a good story well told, and informed by historical understanding; there is no better novel about the Indian Mutiny.

Mrs Steel wrote fast and wrote a great deal. Not for her Kipling's meticulous exclusion of every superfluous word. Her people draw themselves up to their full height before saying anything important. The walls of Delhi are always rose-red—though in fact, as Cecil Beaton noticed, they are tongue-coloured, not at all like roses. She is not a stylist. But it would be a mistake to suggest that she was less an artist than an administrator *monique*; she was both. Her Mugger emperors and their families are, it is true, sometimes oddly like Victorian Deputy Commissioners; she thought the best kind of government was beneficent tutelage; bewilderment of many Indians torn by conflicting loyalties. But she was also unflinching in her conviction that British rule had to be restored, and in her understanding of the passion for revenge among British officers and men, who derided of women and children. She softens the edges of the atrocities on both sides. There is only one class of person for whom Flora Annie Steel shows no sympathy, the man at a desk who hesitates to take a decision, or who takes a decision of which she disapproves.

On the Face of the Waters begins brilliantly, with an auction-sale of the elephants and tigers belonging to the King of Oudh, deposed the year before the Mutiny broke out. A white cockatoo that has been taught the Muslim war-cry: *Dihl Dihl Fitch Mohammadi!*—The Faithful Victory to Mohammed—is brought at a high price to satisfy the idle whim of a passing Englishwoman. The purchase of the bird, indeed the whole auction, is felt by the bystanders to be a deep injustice; the cockatoo, symbol at once of British arrogance and of militant Islam, is kept as a pet by an English child, finds his way to the Emperor's palace in Delhi, and starves to death when the sepoys' cause falls to pieces.

On the other hand, there is the strange story of Craddock, a guard in the Indian railway service, who appeared to her one evening in Scotland, exact in every physical detail, and told her a tale of which she had no previous inkling.

Flora Annie Steel wrote four books about the Indian Mutiny, not exactly novels, more like what would now be called docu-fiction. She wrote closely to recorded facts and is always to be relied on about such matters as crops or the feelings of peasants. But the feelings of her main characters become more and more a projection of her own. This is par-

ticularly so in *Mistress of Men*, which narrates the life of Nur Jahan (Light of the World), the wife of Jahangir, Akbar's son. She was both beautiful and clever and was adored by Jahangir. She used her power over him to the utmost to upgrade her own family, say conventional historians; to spread justice and mercy, says Flora. Nur Jahan had never loved either of her husbands "as a woman can love a man", and in the end she is made to bewail this gap in her experience and also, less convincingly, the beauty which made men desire her.

Flora was extraordinarily forthright and candid about herself in *The Garden of Fidelity*, where she writes: "Why I married I cannot say; I never have been able to say. I do not think either of us was in love. I know I was not; I never have been." Yet she had more than one close Platonic relationship with men—indeed and showed signs of jealousy when one of them married. It can hardly be doubted that it was she, not Nur Jahan, who regretted the eunuch she had married and who at the same time liked to feel that she would have preferred to exercise power behind on something other than sexual attraction.

Lady Violet Powell has written a biography of Flora Annie Steel which was needed and which has many virtues, not least that of sending me back to Flora's own books. This book is quite free from the moral anachronism which men so much writing about the British in India. It gives us a workmanlike account of Flora's life; with most of the plums from *The Garden of Fidelity*, supplemented by additional material provided by Flora's grandson and valuable side-lights brought to the fore by the author. Above all, the reader is left with a strong impression of Flora's character and presence; at the end it is as though an old friend had just died, leaving a blank in the place of her wide sympathies, her mixture of unfeeling common-sense and romantic intuition.

But this is a very restrained biography. I, at least, would have liked to learn more of Lady Violet's own estimate of Flora both as a woman and as a novelist, and to have had some discussion of the surprising strength of her appeal to the British public. What was it, in the brassy Edwardian period, which made people read *Kim* and *On the Face of the Waters*, with their sympathy both for Hinduism and Islam, their hints of esoteric knowledge of strange sects, their glimpses of an altogether unknown world? Why was it felt proper that Indians should speak in the language of the Authorized Version of the Bible? These are speculative questions, but they deserve discussion.

BRIAN SOUTHAM (Editor): Jane Austen's Sir Charles Grandison
150pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £7.95.
0 19 812637 9

What is a classic? Apart from everything else, any work by Jane Austen, beloved on all sides and banned by no school of taste—except in Mark Twain's private library. So "Sir Charles Grandison" is instantly a classic, though nobody has yet read it. It arrives 228 years after Sir Charles Grandison, and will soon be known to more people than Richardson's novel. (It is, of course, the more readable but that is not the reason, exactly.) It comes garnished with a foreword by Lord David Cecil and a critical introduction. It has a "reading text" and a diplomatic transcript of the holograph. There are notes on the manuscript and notes to explain the allusions to Richardson. Signs and conventions require a page supplying a "key" to these mysteries. There are photographic facsimiles and minute physical descriptions. We have a variorum almost before we know we had the book.

All this is explicable enough. With a writer whose career was so desolatingly brief, any new material must constitute a literary event. The slender corpus has gradually been squeezed outwards; but its expansion has mostly been made of *dis-juncta membra* (the torso of *Samuel Johnson*, the *apocryphal fragments*, the *improvisatory juvenilia*, "Sir Charles Grandison" is at last a whole. The two inches of ivory have been reduced to two millimetres, but for once nothing is missing. Five sets of social comedy carved on a cherry-stone: unity of time and action (if not place) observed, the entire miniaturized scenario specified with strict regard to Aristotle's rules.

So selling down of size goes with selling up of literary hoopings. "The essence of the joke," remarks Brian Southam in his informative introduction, "is the reduction of a mammoth novel to a miniature play." And the comprehensiveness of the edition augments the joke. A huge text enters the public world, its private particularities aggrandized by the full scholarly apparatus. I have sometimes heard of an *liad* in a nutshell, but here we are given Homer and his commentaries, a ready-made Oxford Classical Text. Other books hover for generations on the margin of popular favour and critical acceptance. "Grandison" has long defied its way to canonical status without any intermediate stage. However explicable the circumstances, it is still, one must acknowledge, a little strange.

Jane Austen is one of that rare breed of artists who possess both talent and genius; the transcendent case is Mozart (whose, perhaps, a flaw in the diatonic of Peter Shaffer's *Amadeus*). It follows that her slightest offerings are likely to show some high intrinsic interest. "The History of England" and "Love and Friendship" are indeed gorgeous texts, and *The Watsons* has more than derived significance. But we encounter these in those who are, willingly or not, out of full-time employment. It is even the case that specialist eighteenth-century scholars tend to have only a dim recollection of the details of *Grandison*, and the publication of "Grandison" will promote some salutary re-service training. There is the least excuse for us all, because Jocelyn Harris's edition in three volumes (Oxford English Novels, 1972) is by far the best which any eighteenth-century novel has ever received anywhere. At present this prize scholarly bloom wastes much of its sweetness on the desert air of neglect, and a fortuitous result of the new publication may be to make people realize just how the major uncollected novelists should be edited.

But our business is books, not editions, and here the problems of intention and influence are fascinating. Southam provides a useful register of direct allusions to the narrative of *Grandison*. Most of them relate to the first and last volumes, for Jane Austen has no truck with Clementina (except in a brief off-stage reference), and so the last list is undoubtedly *Grandison's* Harriet's abduction near the start; her rescue by Grandison; and then her marriage and that of Charlotte Grandison. The abduction also occurs off-stage, but then so it does in the novel, with Reeves giving Sally conflicting accounts of it; Harriet's last words had mentioned the

authorship can be disposed of without much ado. Family tradition had always ascribed the play to Anna Lefroy, the daughter of Jane's eldest brother James and his first wife Anne. Mr Southam makes a very convincing case for relegating Anna to the role of a scarcely comprehending childish assistant. She would have been no more than seven in 1800, when (according to the drift of the evidence) the play was complete. Family tradition can be as unreliable as any other brand of gossip, and hereditary rumours are indeed the most insidious. The editor's reasons for disputing the received story are set out with some care, and most readers will accept the case as overwhelmingly strong, if not absolutely conclusive.

The detailed evidence need not be set out here. It relates to such matters as watermarks, a snail of contemporary song mentioned in the text, and physical features of the manuscript. It would need a greater expert than me to dispute with Southam over paleographic questions in this area. Admittedly, the distinction between an "early" handwriting, described as "much less formed" and "less mature", and a later hand, seems to rest on subjective factors. Scholarly inquiry is littered with the mistakes of amateur graphologists, who over-confidently assign age and sex on the length of ascenders, the placing of dots or the roundness of loops. But this issue is a subsidiary one. The main point in question is the identity of the author, and even though—minor addenda to Jane's works notwithstanding—it seems hard to take away from Anna Lefroy one of her few claims to renown, the onus of proof now certainly lies with her proponents.

More awkward is the matter of literary merit. Southam candidly admits, "We are certainly not dealing with the vintage Jane Austen. 'Grandison' is amusing enough and highly performable, but no masterpiece, not even a minor masterpiece." All that is true, and it must be added that even by the highest standards of Jane Austen's juvenilia "Grandison" makes a muffled impact. The editor would put this down to the degree of authorial dependence on Richardson. He writes, "Clearly, Jane Austen enjoyed herself in devising a style of allusive counterpoint that calls for nothing less than a voracious knowledge of *Grandison*." The expression "allusive counterpoint" may be dressing things up a little, but of the counterpoint there can be no doubt.

Richardson supplied Jane Austen with one title—"Love and Friendship"—and with a trove of comic scenarios for the early works. There are fewer direct allusions in the later books, and only a couple in the letters. It is conceivable that his immense volumes occupied a less prominent place in her imagination in her mature years. Not only are they novels of *longue haleine*, they require a fair amount of leisure if one is to read and re-read them, a luxury increasingly denied to Jane Austen and now available only to those who are, willingly or not, out of full-time employment. It is even the case that specialist eighteenth-century scholars tend to have only a dim recollection of the details of *Grandison*, and the publication of "Grandison" will promote some salutary re-service training. There is the least excuse for us all, because Jocelyn Harris's edition in three volumes (Oxford English Novels, 1972) is by far the best which any eighteenth-century novel has ever received anywhere. At present this prize scholarly bloom wastes much of its sweetness on the desert air of neglect, and a fortuitous result of the new publication may be to make people realize just how the major uncollected novelists should be edited.

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Richardson in a nutshell

By Pat Rogers

pretty fellows she expected to "day" in her masquerade costume as an Arcadian princess; Jane Austen does not introduce Harriet at all, until the scene of her forced marriage with Sir Hargrave. (It may be that certain features of the dramatic management have to do with the casting exigencies at Steventon: that these existed may be deduced from the parts later handed round *Lovers Vows*.) There is a splendid moment of high comedy, without flattery from the novel, when Harriet flings the prayer-book into the fire as soon as a clergyman intones the first syllables of the wedding service. It would be too easy to read into this gesture a rejection of patriarchal marriage, but there is certainly a sort of admirable hoiden in this Harriet's make-up at which her original creator would have blushed.

The most striking connection between novel and play occurs in respect of language. Southam worries about the deficiencies of Jane Austen's dramatic utterance, and suggests that "the very commonplaceness and banality of the dialogue could be part of the joke." This remark needs opening out a little. One of Richardson's aims in *Grandison* was to make use of familiar expressions and homely allusion; as Jocelyn Harris puts it, "Quotations, references, and ideas in *Grandison* are almost always drawn from popular culture, so that there was nothing to frighten away the less educated reader." Echoes are set up by such things as Sir Rowland Meredith's use of the old proverb: "Happy's the wooling that is not long a-doing." This is mimicked in the play, where natural speech and sentimental maxims are always on the point of colliding ("Come, Caroline, make haste, or the fit will be off.")

Indeed, there are moments when the model seems not to be Richardson but, a generation earlier, Swift's *Polite Conversation*. Extracts such as the following would be plausibly assigned to Swift by a good candidate for any defining paper:

MISS G. Oh! for shame, Caroline, I thought you knew better than to tell tales. Lord L... will you have any more tea?

Or again this:
LADY L. But Charlotte, where is Miss Byron?
MISS G. Very safe in her own room. I always send her away when she naps.
LADY L. Poor creature! I hope she does not nap too often. But, seriously, Charlotte, is she worse or better?
MISS G. Lady L... you are so afraid I shall not take care of her. Why, she is just as she always is—languid at three o'clock.

"Gaper" here just means "yawner". And finally, from Mr. Solby, "Adieu! we shall have a double marriage, as sure as two and two make four."

This mocking vulgarity calls into question Jane Austen's entire relation to her predecessor. Southam argues that she wished "to deflate *Grandison's* epic proportions and the elaboration and leisureliness of its procedure." He also thinks that "the play is a show and amusing swipe at the character of Richardson's 'happy man' (Sir Charles)". I am not sure that deflation or swipes are quite what is going on. The play might rather be seen as mock-*Richardson*, in the sense of mock-epic: that is, with Richardson as its instrument rather than its target. It would have been easy for Jane Austen to make much more of the hero's pomposity and improbably sustained virtue if that had been her prime object. In the event, he has a comparatively small role in the drama, and we might fairly conclude that Jane (knowing of the analog abridgements and parodies) was simply trying to produce an ultra-condensed version, in the way that people try to squeeze more bodies into a mini-car. The tone of the proceedings is not exactly that of parody; it is more like an agreeable *divertissement*, attempting to remind the participants of as many favourite events as possible in the shortest space. The joke is to show up the absurdities to which even a grand narrative may be reduced—but without damaging the original. In the end, the play serves to demonstrate the need for Richardson to go on as long as he did. Epic proportions, leisureliness and all the rest are not threatened by a twenty-minute playlet.

It is a playlet, too, with all the *Barley-sweet-and-bijou* connotations the word might carry. The almost redundant efficiency of the edition shows us that when Jane Austen chose to be slight, slight is what she was.



Jones Grant Raymond (1771-1817) in the title role of Knicker's The Stranger, or Misanthropy and Repentance, at the Lyceum in 1810. The picture comes from the Maughvi Collection of Theatrical Paintings, now permanently on show at the National Theatre (Commentary, March 6). August von Kosebutz, a German dramatist more popular in his day than Schiller, wrote over 200 pieces and was performed throughout Europe. The Stranger was first played in London at Drury Lane, with John Philip Kemble in the title role and Sarah Siddons as the crying wife with whom he is finally reunited in an emotional scene involving the children. Many actors played the part, among them George Frederick Cooke (a new life of whom will be reviewed in a forthcoming issue of the TLS), and played stoned in the London repertoire throughout the nineteenth century. Another of Kosebutz's romantic dramas of desertion and reconciliation, Das Kind der Liebe, was adapted by Elizabeth Inchbald as *Lovers Vows*, the play immortalized by Jane Austen in *Mansfield Park*.

Freedom's forms

By David Trotter

PETER MALEKIN: Liberty and Love English Literature and Society 1640-88
219pp. Hutchinson. £10. (paperback, £4.50).
0 09 143040 2

To call a book about English literature and society from 1640 to 1688 *Liberty and Love* is perhaps to hint at a particular abundance of those qualities during the period. It reminds, however, a hint. The book itself is more soberly concerned with attitudes to the political constitution and the family.

Peter Malekin has written for "the energetic and intelligent general reader rather than specialist reader", and it must be admitted that his choice of material is unadventurous. He gives little sense of the breadth and variety of views expressed about his two main themes. Even the selection of major works seems questionable. *Pilgrim's Progress*, for example, has been excluded because it does not "relate" to those themes. Yet a devotional work

which inspired later generations of radicals must surely tell us something about the connection between spiritual and political liberty; and a story which opens with a man choosing salvation rather than his wife and children must surely tell us something about attitudes to family life.

This would not matter if the analysis of the works selected were penetrating. That it often isn't can be seen by comparing Malekin's account of Marvell's "Horatian Ode" with that provided by R.V.V. Hodge. In his book *Forethought Time*, Hodge clarifies the tensions within the poem by a careful handling of the implications of genre, possible audience and a training in logic. This is the kind of historical knowledge which Malekin promises to deploy, but rarely does—with the result that his reading of the "Horatian Ode" seems cautious and flat. "Marvell", he concludes, "is coming to terms with things"; and the general reader whose energy and intelligence have not been exhausted by this hypothesis will find little to encourage him in the bibliography, where the only item listed is John Wallace's *Destiny His Choice*.

Malekin's topic is an interesting and important one, for the general and the specialist reader alike. Both deserve something more incisive than he provides.

In exasperation

By Daniel Johnson

WOLFGANG FIETKAU: Schwaneingang auf 1848: Ein Rückblick aus dem Loovr: Baudelaire, Marx, Proudhon und Victor Hugo
471pp. Rowohlt. DM22.
3 499 25106 X

This is a very original book, but its originality is of a dangerous kind. Its selection is an exegesis of a single poem from *Les Fleurs du Mal*, "Le Cygne", which involves the assistance of the most fashionable German gurus of left and right—Walter Benjamin and Carl Schmitt; Brecht, Hegel and Stefan George. But though much has been omitted to make way for disquisitions on Freud, Proust, the Young and the old would like to know more about the sinister influences upon Baudelaire, such as the Mafire, which the author adduces to explain left-wing disdain for this devoted admirer of Proudhon (whose fit-treatment by Marx was a further reason for suspicion of Baudelaire). In general readers of his erudite *au d'espri* will be borne along by the thrill of the chase.

The chase always returns to the Insecurity of post-1968 West Germany.

even the punks, apparently, have something in common with Baudelaire. The book is not just about Baudelaire's swan-song—it is a swan-song, one which incorporates its own critique: "That the glorification of the vanished is no alternative to disillusion with what came afterwards—this quiescence... offers itself in all its poverty and presumption as a corrective to sentimental reminiscence."

Whether Fietkau properly applies this criticism is another matter. "Le Cygne" is seen as the despairing but wistful epitaph of a man exiled. In his beloved and beleaguered city. The book's underlying key is minor, though overlaid by the brilliant, brittle and impure style, characteristic of Berlin academics; there are a great many unnecessary English and Latin phrases, and even where these seem justified they are sometimes garbled.

Nietzsche described Parisian literary society under the Second Empire as being pervaded by "exasperated pessimism, cynicism, nihilism, alternating with plenty of witlessness and good humour... One must be more critical: at bottom they are all looking in what matters—'la force'." Fietkau accepts this view, and he knows why *la force* is lacking in his own ego too, 1968 has left no swansong to cast beside Baudelaire's; only this excellent Alexandrian scholasticism of sentimentality.

John C. C. 1981

Fall of a stand-up comic

By Russell Davies

ERIC MORECAMBE
Mr Lonely
190pp. Eyre Methuen. £5.95.
0 413 48170 0.

Having admired for so long the many distinguished plays what little Eric Morecambe himself as the first-person narrator of a flashback in Chapter Six. A reminder that he is present within the texture of the narrative is perhaps superficial, however, as his humour leans quite visibly in the direction of Morecambe already: "She was singing something from *Madame Butterfly*. She was terrible and looked old enough to remember *Madame Butterfly* as a caterpillar." A certain number of opinions are implied, too, which are thought to be not unconsent with Mr Morecambe's own. Reputations are forked over here and there. Harry Seemore receives a tribute ("If you don't like Harry, you don't like people"); but Harry, you know, is an agent in wrestling, over the phone, with an impossible singer called Shirley ("The dressing-room's been altered to your specifications..."). And on gala night, where "Joyce and Lionel" are approved but someone who keeps saying "It's the way I tell 'em" has to leave the party, "helped out by a couple of friends", there is a certain amount of barbed talk: "We've got Yarwood on

His singing voice is the envy of Des O'Connor the world over. And who has not cherished his sallies? (There's no answer to that.) Often in pain from a rare allergy to tropical khaki shorts—the wire hoops sewn into these garments to prevent them touching his knees are much prized by collectors—he appears by permission of doctors who are by no means well themselves. Philosophically, he has moved far from the position of avid materialism adopted by his partner, and is now, possibly the leading representative of positivist-empiricist thinking on the variety stage. His famous reply to a question, I believe, of Popper's, "What would you say to a little drink?"—"Hello, little drink!" said Morecambe, a twist of lemon distorting his handsome features—may smack a little of paternalism; but then as Morecambe himself has remarked, what's a little paternalistic smack? They cannot touch you for it.

Typically, his narrative work *Mr Lonely* stands quite outside the tradition of comedians' novels begun by Thomas Hardy, and you may have to stand outside the bookshop to buy it. It is an episodic account of the career of a comedian, Sid Lewis, who adopts the persona of "Mr Lonely" one gala night in East Finchley, has his talent spotted, and, after a medical check, shoots to national fame on television. The nature of the appeal Mr Lonely adds to what Sid Lewis had all along revealed cunningly enough, even in a photograph where Mr Lonely appears,

looking sociable, in top hat, black tie and tails. What Sid and Mr Lonely certainly do share, apart from the lack of a white tie, is the heroic knack of getting seduced after work. No sooner have they come off-stage or camera, than girls called Bobbers and Serina are pressing him to the carpet. It doesn't seem too bad a life, even in East Finchley, and Sid's unloveliness on the morning after makes a change from pathos.

Technically, the novel takes a small but agreeable risk by introducing Mr Morecambe himself as the first-person narrator of a flashback in Chapter Six. A reminder that he is present within the texture of the narrative is perhaps superficial, however, as his humour leans quite visibly in the direction of Morecambe already: "She was singing something from *Madame Butterfly*. She was terrible and looked old enough to remember *Madame Butterfly* as a caterpillar." A certain number of opinions are implied, too, which are thought to be not unconsent with Mr Morecambe's own. Reputations are forked over here and there. Harry Seemore receives a tribute ("If you don't like Harry, you don't like people"); but Harry, you know, is an agent in wrestling, over the phone, with an impossible singer called Shirley ("The dressing-room's been altered to your specifications..."). And on gala night, where "Joyce and Lionel" are approved but someone who keeps saying "It's the way I tell 'em" has to leave the party, "helped out by a couple of friends", there is a certain amount of barbed talk: "We've got Yarwood on

Alienation effects

By Peter Mackridge

ANTONIS SAMARAKIS
The Passport
Translated by Gavin Betts
112pp. Cheshire, Australia: Longman.
0 582 68691 1

Antonis Samarakis is one of the best-known fiction writers in Greece today. His novel *The Finn* has been published in an English translation and has been made into a film in France. He writes of sensitive individuals alienated in a modern urban society in which state control and manip-

the third of September. 'He's great.' 'I only hope that while he's here Heath and Wilson stay alive...' If only Mr Morecambe had sited the cun in the north, he could have called this chapter *Mallett in Sunderland*. But this side of the novel—what might be called its *roman à l'anglais*—does not seem to be a story where Serina and Bobbers are away on legitimate correct-pressing assignments with their husbands-to-be.

Sid, in the end, is thrown away; not bolted by his own petard so much as pierced by his own award, after a showbiz prizefighting. But he had seemed to enjoy life only in a grim sort of way, so it was perhaps no great loss. It is a disappointment that Mr Morecambe does not, in fact, make time as interesting as the preceding struggle; but the fact that he was driven to write a novel at all perhaps suggested, all along, that he was not as interesting as it ought to be. He returns to the form—and propelled as I sense he is by otherwise unventilated anger, he may well do so—I would suggest he lays off mothers-in-law (too traditional a target); unattractive women (scorning ugliness is the most medieval remaining function of the comic trade); and coloured people, about whom he and Sid are uncomfortably equivocal ("Some of these blacks do a good job"). There are still plenty of areas left in the comedy profession to explore. One would welcome, for example, Morecambe's backstage view of charity performances, or "necro grannies", as they were called by Oide.

ulation is the norm and in which the individual conscience is suppressed. Because of Samarakis's desire to be universal (and because to him totalitarianism is the great enemy, irrespective of whether it emanates from the Left or the Right), many of his novels and stories take place in unnamed locations, and the characters, too, are often nameless. This means that although his plots are skilfully contrived the lack of specific background to the characters, and their own lack of individual traits, makes for an abstractness which, paradoxically, comes to dehumanize his undoubtedly humanistic message.

Literature is not made with good intentions alone. Samarakis is to be admired for his emphasis on the individual conscience revolting against conformity and injustice, and on the attempt to make contact with the few humans being despite the inhibiting conventions of society. But, as some of the stories in *The Passport* (written during the 1960s and 1970s) demonstrate, the ideas and convictions of the author and his characters are often no more than stated explicitly: they are stripped of any convoluted psychological detail and human emotion. Samarakis freely handles such terms such as "The Absurd" and "The Bomb" which have ready-made connotations before they enter his writing; he adds little to there. Also, one feels that he constructs his narrative situations on ground that has already been amply covered by Kafka, Sartre and Camus, and in 1984 and *Brave New World*; he breaks little new ground himself.

In some of the stories of *The Passport*, however, Samarakis does transcend his usual limitations. The most successful story is "The Last Participation", and it is perhaps a hopeful sign that it seems to be the most recent of the pieces collected here. It is written in the first person; whereas the more typical third person of Samarakis's narrative tends to distance the characters too much, here we have the central character participating not only in the action but in its recording. The first person also gives Samarakis an opportunity to work a most effective trick on the reader. The story is about the funeral of a man whose son has been arrested by the Security Police for his participation in a student demonstration against the Cokoules regime. The young man arrives late and under guard, and immediately becomes the centre of attention, so much so that a relative hands him a red rose intended for the deceased. Only towards the end of the piece do we learn that the story is being narrated by the man whose funeral it is he is gratified that the young man, for Dimitris represents hope for a future of peace and liberty. In this piece the first-person narrator, the reality details of time and place, and the family setting create a profound effect, than some of the author's hackneyed pieces about the faceless "little man".

Devilish devices

By T. O. Treadwell

MICHAEL EDWARDS
The Man from the Other Shore
180pp. Hamish Hamilton. £6.95.
0 241 10615 X

The Man from the Other Shore tells the story of Zedek, the son of Greek parents in Turkish Asia Minor. He uses his gifts of quick-wittedness and an absolute freedom from scruples to become a millionaire arms dealer and one of the most powerful men in the world, and dies, old and full of himself, literally laughing. The story is told in the third person by a narrator who admires himself very frequently into the text, most often to suggest to the reader an appropriate response to the passage before him.

At its best, this technique creates an attractively self-effacing comedy. We are told, for example, that Zedek belongs to a group of free-enterprising Constantinopolitan businessmen who can a living by setting business premises alight and then denouncing a bribe before they will extinguish the ensuing conflagration. The scene is set in April 1865 in the context of a major contemporary event, Leo's surrender to Grant at Appomattox, but the potential pretentiousness of this is neatly punctured by the narrator's intrusion:

Generals Lee and Grant and a Constantinople fireman? No, there's no fancy symbolism; you know the sort of thing—war is arson, somebody starts it, somebody puts it out. Nothing like that.

As the novel progresses, these interventions become increasingly frequent. Appearances of biography proper are introduced, including lengthy extracts from the report of a special committee of the US Senate in which politicians prominent at the time address themselves to the matter of the arms trade. Zedek has dealings with a wide range of historical figures,

from Lloyd George and Clemenceau to the keeper of the male *bandello* de la Rie de l'Arcade, who will be *faute de mieux* to readers of George Painter's biography of Prinet. Zedek is, in other words, a major actor in the drama of his time, and continues what the reader may have expected, that *The Man from the Other Shore* is a fantasia on the life of Sir Basil Zaharoff (1849-1936).

In this afterword, Michael Edwards refers to his book as a "fiction" (surely time to prohibit this comic term). He quotes, in justification of his genre, André Gide's dictum that "Fiction is a history which has taken place, and he goes on to say that he takes this to mean that "real life is an intricate mixture of fact and fiction". Though it is difficult to see how this conclusion follows from Gide's remark, it is certainly true that history is the imposition of order on the chaos of collective past experience and is therefore inevitably an artifice. But the order imposed on Zaharoff's life and times by Mr Edwards is the order not of historic method but of romance, and *The Man from the Other Shore* remains firmly within the ranks of fiction.

Michael Edwards is concerned that he share his horror at the vast waste made by selling instruments of death. His Zedek (the name is well-chosen; Zaharoff's middle initial was Z and "Zedek" has sinisterly apocalyptic connotations) is the very devil, but this confuses Edwards with the moralist's old ad intrinsig problem—the devil is devilishly glib. This problem remains unsolved. *The Man from the Other Shore* is a minor war. There, when Michael Edwards stands back to explain how wicked all this is we can admire his principles and congratulate ourselves for shaming them, but the energy of the novel has drained away.

Daily doings

By Craig Brown

KETH COLQUHOUN
Goebbels and Gladys
180pp. John Murray. £6.95.
0 7195 3787 8

The archetypal journalist is slumped over a bar or a typewriter. It doesn't matter which, his collar unbuckled, the knot of his tie drifting sedately down towards his paunch, a weary accent on his face, a mountain of stub growing in the nostrils, the latest cigarette, nearly half of it froth ash, balancing upright, the dim torch of his lip waiting to be relayed to the next in the packet. Many visitors to Fleet Street are surprised to find themselves surrounded by journalists living up to this archetype, but on reflection it is less surprising: the journalist's mind is an amalgam of cliché and fantasy, the cliché having grown from three spent flogging news into one of a small chalice of moulds, the fantasy more a conviction that words, if only better chosen, and arranged, could enable their author to lead an independent, country-cottage type existence.

Keth Colquhoun, himself a journalist, is so alert to the absurdities of Fleet Street that really a journalist reading *Goebbels and Gladys* will feel a touch of paranoia, as if Colquhoun had been listening in with his tape recorder. So many of the details are accurate, the rumours of folding beds in the women's department, the manic enthusiasm for messy journalists who are encouraged to "outlet" the sudden discoveries of forgotten cuttings files, the pushy, clean-cut executives who always achieve their ambitions. Colquhoun's report of a new editorial idea of dynamic journalism is particularly good.

"Rationalism," he repeated, "or realism. Perhaps we should take an early decision about which word we will use, and then we will go for the shorter one, rationalism." It is the most important issue in the world today, and no one

will touch it. We are going to remedy that.

"We are going to tackle it responsibly and directly. We are going to drive this tabloid subject out into the open, and get it talked about, and get it talked about... What is it? It is the dislike of white for black and black for white. Not merely dislike, hatred. That is a strong word, and we are going to use strong words. I don't want to see it copy words like misandromaniac and mutual respect..."

But Colquhoun and his narrator, Keth Verity, take such an understated delight in the minutiae of Fleet Street that they forget they are not simply writing a personal diary. Their lengthy descriptions of restaurants and meat, too, journeys and aeroplane flight are included, it seems, for no reason other than that Colquhoun happened to be feeling peckish or restless at the time. Colquhoun's pursuit of social accuracy and amusement also undermines the plan of his book. The rather distant and empty ending—Verity says "Job, says Gladys"—appears to be tagged on in embarrassment: it is the country cottage writer's penance for the glibness and enjoyment of describing the details and compromises of the least of shame. In the end one is left wishing that Colquhoun had not tugged so close to Verity ("Occasionally friends have asked me whether I was writing a novel or not...") and that the novelist had looked at the editor's coldly from the conductor's side the curious sight of so many journalists dancing with themselves.

The Sky Above Hell (160pp. Now York: Doubleday, \$7.95 0 3008 7236 3) is a collection of stories by Yuri Mamleyev, translated by H. W. Tjalsma. Mamleyev, a Soviet writer, now living in the United States, and the Russia of his stories is (according to the publishers) "a moral tundra of random murder, occultism, chaos, brutality and madness". His fiction is in the tradition of "fantastic realism" established by Gogol and Dostoevsky.

Escaping into flux

By Julie Kavanagh

MARILYNNE ROBINSON
Housekeeping
219pp. Faber. £5.25.
0 571 11713 9

At the beginning of Marilynne Robinson's outstanding first novel, set in a far-western town by a glacial lake, domesticity is endowed with an almost spiritual aura. After the death of their father (the train he was on plunged into the lake), his three adolescent daughters leave like infants to their mother, who endures them with a kind of elemental warmth. The stability of their home is palpable: the girls sleep on stretched sheets under layers of quilts, their mother makes cakes and apple sauce on rainy days and in summer mixes a pot-pourri of brown rose petals and spices. But the novel sets out to subvert this kind of tranquillity, exposing it as illusory, and housekeeping subsequently becomes a genre of despair.

Years later, when Helen, one of the daughters, returns home to Fingerbone to commit suicide by driving her car into the lake, her mother tries to restore order to the lives of the two children Helen leaves behind by adhering to household routine. "She whitened shoes and braided hair and turned back bedclothes as if re-nourishing the commonplace would make it merely commonplace again." The ineffectuality of domesticity is further emphasized in her dreams. Once she sees a baby falling from an aeroplane and tries to catch it in her apron, and once she tries to fish a baby out of a well with a tea-strainer. The two jittery maiden grooms who housekeep for Ruth and Lucille when their grandmother dies likewise take refuge in habit and familiarity as a way of handling a crisis. But their veneration of routine, of the need to make each day a replica of the next, is not to be reconciled with the vicissitudes of growing children ("Lucille and I perpetually threatened to cough or sneeze our shoes"). This runs the girls back to their basement room in a residential hotel, leaving Sylvie, Helen's vagrant sister to take over guardianship of the girls.

Housekeeping to Sylvie means a mingling of love and squalor: she collects opened tins and newspapers, allows leas, swallows, mice and thirteen cats the run of the house (attuning it to the natural world outside), and involuntarily convulses in the sisters' trances from school by providing solemn notes which affirm their sham symptoms. This good-natured eccentricity, however, has far more significance than is at first apparent. The sequenced velvetiness of her behaviour, Sylvie buys as school shoes for the girls represent not just her liking of beautiful gowns, but, spilling as they instantly do on the muddy walk to school, are symbols of the novel's main theme: an acceptance of transience, an acceptance which Sylvie embodies: "To her, the deteriorations of things were always a fresh surprise." Lucille's growing desire to conform to the lives of ordinary people is expressed in her rejection of these slipshod, she pulls the sequins off her demands red rubber boots: "Lucille saw it everything, his potential for invidious change... Ruffles wilted, sequins fell."

Ruth and Lucille often come home after a day's truancy to the woods to find Sylvie sitting—and sometimes eating—in the dark. The habit not only exemplifies Sylvie's nonconformity, but is integral to the novel's thematic whole. Darkness on the one hand conceals the veil that dirt and clutter that Sylvie ignores, but it is also a kind of anydysia for her. (The reason, Ruth says, why she gave the word "evening" three syllables.) Then, again, darkness is given a mystical relevance. In an account of skating at night on the lake which echoes *The Prelude*, Ruth senses a presence "too close" and stepping nearer. "And one night, after coming fish on the shore with Lucille, she felt into a kind of trance during which it became clear to her, that darkness can be a 'solvent' to the flux of life."

"Only the darkness could be perfect and permanent." Finally, all this is put in an oblique Christian context which, towards the end of the novel, an allusion to Christ's death on the shore refers one back to the childhood incident, suggesting that Ruth's trance by the lake was a kind of religious experience. That the darkness was then, as in Eliot's paradox in *The Four Quartets*, "the darkness of God."

Rather as Eliot did in his poem, Ms Robinson incorporates seemingly mundane incidents and images to an overall metaphysical design. References to wild strawberries, dead leaves, reflections in a lighted window (associated with Ruth's mother) recur more and more frequently. The novel implies that memory and loss can paradoxically be a reminder of an eternal reunion to come: "The first event is known to have been an expulsion, and the last is hoped to be a reconciliation and return. So memory pulls us forward." Seen in these terms, mourning becomes something positive. At the end of *Housekeeping*, the Christian myth becomes more explicitly linked to legends attached to Fingerbone: a reference to Ood walking on the water reminds us of the local faith-healer who died trying to do the same; the flooding of Fingerbone Lake and the lives it commences are made analogous to the biblical Flood; Ruth's vision of eternity as a garden with "all of us as one child" assimilates the book's several references to strange packs of spectral children.

Though there is a vein of Christian faith running through this novel, it is not overt or over-schematic. Sylvie's transcendence can be taken as allegorical, but at the same time she is an original, fully developed character in her own right. The growing rift between the sisters is also marvellously depicted, in a way that is both poignant and comic. It reaches its peak during an incident in which they come to physical blows: Ruth has found various flowers pressed and preserved in her grandfather's dictionary under corresponding letters of the alphabet. Lucille shakes them out and crushes them—a gesture, like that of pulling the sequins off her slippers, that emphasizes her rejection of the household's unorthodox totems.

While Ruth, like Sylvie, clearly now feels "the life of polished things" and knows that "what perished need not be lost", Lucille demands a solid home and predictable adolescent requirements like new dresses and new polish. She goes to live with one of her schoolteachers, leaving Ruth and Sylvie to keep house in their own wayward fashion. When the tranquil understanding that now exists between them is threatened by meddling neighbours, who rightly assume that Sylvie is imposing her vagrancy on the girl, Ruth and Lucille decide that rather than be separated, with Ruth committed into care, they should escape together, into a life of transience. They burn the house at night and cross the vast railway bridge that spans Fingerbone Lake.

The previously realistic narrative now begins to mirror the drift of new freedom and to take the form of arcane, meandering reflections. That the pair have symbolically transcended the mundane by crossing the bridge is reiterated by a free—no time, inaccessible—prose style. The flux which *Housekeeping* appropos to endure is also emphasized throughout by an abundance of similes, which contrive a sense of continual change and assist a dissolution of the actual. Ms Robinson will often use two or three similes at a time, and this, as well as the serpentine movement of her sentences, reflects the novel's themes of dematerialization and itinerancy: "Downstairs the flood bumped and fumbled like a blind man in a strange house, but outside it hissed and trickled like the pressure of water against your eardrums, and like the sounds you hear in the moment before you faint."

There is also in *Housekeeping* an aesthetic relish of words for their own sake, facilitated by Ms Robinson's exceptional command of language. Like Seamus Heaney in his essay "Mossbawn", she has the gift of evoking childhood through a graphic record of visual and tactile sensations. And like Nabokov in *Invitation of a Bearded Man*, she achieves a lyrical colouring of everyday objects that is in itself a kind of poetry.

To call *Housekeeping* a novel is possibly to traduce it, since thematically and stylistically it offers itself as a long prose poem (that the magazine *Quarto* printed an extract from a chapter as a poem called "Loss" would seem to confirm this status). It is a complex work, and as such should be read slowly and carefully, but this is not to cooking fish on the shore refers one back to the childhood incident, suggesting that Ruth's trance by the lake was a kind of religious experience. That the darkness was then, as in Eliot's paradox in *The Four Quartets*, "the darkness of God."

Terser and terser

By Eric Korn

PETER TINNIWOOD
Shemereida
157pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £5.95.
0 340 22718 4

Peter Tinniswood is a eloquent, Manchester-raised, Scouse eccentric whose novels of idiosyncratic North-of-England domesticity—especially *A Touch of Dunk* and *I Didn't Know You Could*—struck a seam of tenderly coarse humour for humorously coarse tenderness, or... that won him a nighty—admiration and a television series.

His last novel, *The Sirk of Sirk*, was uncharacteristic: a Robin Hood romp that went n-camping in Sherwood Forest and exploited, and was disfigured by, Tinniswood's new pet, the short blunt sentence curiously woven into short blunt paragraphs, a style hybridized of Brautigan, Fichtelberg and Oates. In the seven years since, while its discoverer has been busy with stage and broadcasting, his creature has festered. In *Shemereida*, or, to give it, just this once, its full title, *Shemereida by the incredibly beautiful H.H. Washbrook as told to Peter Tinniswood*, brevity is carried to unheard-of lengths: already this very sentence contains more syntax, by an appreciable margin, than the entire novella.

Such a style has its virtues.

It lets the action move with apparent swiftness. And the pages be turned. Fast. As for example:

He nods.
He giggles.
He speaks.

(Just like Frank Richards. Who wrote "Ouch" on one line. And "Yaroo" on the next. And "Cheese it, you duffers" on the one after. But he was paid by the line.) 'This terseness also underlines the vigour and originality of Tinniswood's choice of words:

"The meadows sodden with duck". Or "Past drink-fested steps. Past paddy-whacked bar. Past on and liar. Past run and cripple." His animal noises are particularly impressive. The yard of a bobcat. The zipp-zirp of the telephone. The sinner of the hem of her Bruges lace skirt. There are also authorial interventions. These are in italics. They often consist of rhetorical questions. Which are answered rhetorically.

What? For chrissakes, dear reader, don't keep saying what. He's driving me bananas. Am I going to recount the plot?

Scarcely. Shemereida is incredibly beautiful and astonishingly rich. She moves in an atmosphere of exotic birds, rich foodstuffs, and upmarket consumer durables. She dresses exquisitely. And often. There is a seemingly complaisant husband. And lovers. And mysterious, menacing messengers. The plot thickens. There is Mirakel, of whom she sighs: "I need your pluck in the fig-fresh gape that flickers". Is there more to him than pumping thighs and buck of back? Is Laverne Van Striden as permissive as she seems? And what of the corpse of Rogan Shief? And why do all these names seem misspelled? The action accelerates. The shadow of E.J. Thrill lies heavy. Does this style have a drawback? Several. Though the book is short, it outlasts the joke. It wastes paper. And the author's talents. The last chapter reads.

Yea. Yes. What an incredibly beautiful ending. I hope I haven't given anything away.

Strangers under the trees

By Mark Abley

SEAN VIRGO
White Lies and Other Fictions
150pp. Hamish Hamilton. £6.95.
0 241 10546 3

"With the whispering rattle of seeds on a drum they were taking the old man home." The final story of *White Lies* takes place in a hospital in British Columbia, where a silent old Indian lies dying. He is, like most of Sean Virgo's characters, out of place; previous stories have centred on a tropical colonialist drift in Paris, a German in a Canadian logging camp, a Québécois soldier stationed by the Pacific, and an English soldier in Malaya. Virgo's people are observant of physical detail, they respond sharply to messages from their senses; but the rich settings highlight an emotional isolation. For the old man, gradually confronting death, "home" does not mean the Indian houses where his relatives want to take him; "home" is the unknown land of spirit-birds and ancestors, which the man learns to find less alien than his chaotic life. It is only in the final, most impressive qualities of Virgo's fiction that, when his characters belong elsewhere, he can evoke with equal authority their location and their state of mind.

Most of the stories in *White Lies* set boys or men against the nature of the story. The final story of *White Lies* takes place in a hospital in British Columbia, where a silent old Indian lies dying. He is, like most of Sean Virgo's characters, out of place; previous stories have centred on a tropical colonialist drift in Paris, a German in a Canadian logging camp, a Québécois soldier stationed by the Pacific, and an English soldier in Malaya. Virgo's people are observant of physical detail, they respond sharply to messages from their senses; but the rich settings highlight an emotional isolation. For the old man, gradually confronting death, "home" does not mean the Indian houses where his relatives want to take him; "home" is the unknown land of spirit-birds and ancestors, which the man learns to find less alien than his chaotic life. It is only in the final, most impressive qualities of Virgo's fiction that, when his characters belong elsewhere, he can evoke with equal authority their location and their state of mind.

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Obt of ten stories, only one falls flat: the one written in the first person. It's a revealing failure, for the need to create a credible narrator deprives that tale of an interior, spiritual richness, giving it

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In and out of the abyss

By J.I.M. Stewart

LEON EDEL EDITOR
Henry James Letters
Volume III 1883-1895
575pp. Macmillan. £17.50.
0 333 10416 1

Je ne suis point à Paris - je suis dans un coin perdu de l'Angleterre occupé de la chose du monde la moins vraisemblable: la "première" d'une pièce en quatre actes, qui se trame ici ce soir. "Je fais du Théâtre" - je suis tombé bien bas - priez pour moi... Comme vous pensez bien, c'est la soif de l'or qui me pousse dans cette voie désolante.

The date of this letter is January 3, 1891: the coin perdu is Southampton; in a few hours Edward Compton and his repertory company will be presenting to an English audience the dramatic version of *The American* with which Henry James has provided them. And the budding dramatist, now in middle age and full of misgivings, thus expresses his agitation to his young French friend Urbain Alençon. On the following day he sends a telegram to his sister-in-law, Alice James, in America:

Unqualified triumph magnificent success universal congratulations great ovation for author great future for play Comptons radiant and his acting admirable writing Henry

The euphoria here is a little contrived, for James has a habit - essentially defensive in intent - of imparting to every expression of feeling a touch of excess which asks us not to take him too seriously. That James Russell Lowell may lose his post as American Ambassador to the Court of St James's wings, he writes, tears from his eyes; his "heart swells and almost breaks again" when this actually happens. His pen is bewildered and doesn't know where to turn, so onerous is the burden of his correspondence.

He "trembles on the verge" of approaching Mr A.P. Watt, a literary agent. He cares "literally" for nothing but R.L. Stevenson's return to England; he follows the exile's wanderings "with an aching vinge"; it comes over him "with horror and shame" that he may "stand face to face with you branded with the almost blood-guilt of my long silence".

But the genuineness of this *soif de l'or*, although frequently expressed with a similar routine extravagance, is not to be doubted. We have known for a long time now - and chiefly as a result of Professor Edel's scarcely interrupted labours - the surprising fact that James, moving among the affluent both in England and on the Continent, was often uncomfortably hard up. His books didn't sell (in 1884 he had to remind Frederick Macmillan that £2-17-6 was the balance owing to him for a year's sale of some seven or eight of them); the periodicals were increasingly inhospitable; of bluish to own it, but I am in want of money"; an avowed turning up frequently in both his business and his personal correspondence. Alluring, therefore, was the bright prospect of large pecuniary gain that the stage seemed to exhibit. He feels himself, "without swaggers", capable of writing successful comedy "of a serious kind".

Here, then, is the road that led James to Southampton, and to his soon-reviving the last act of *The American* so as to provide it with a happy ending, and thereby "besely gratify" country audiences, and "brilliant thick-wittedness" in general. That the road grew stonier and stonier as he trudged on is the unhappy fact documented in the latter part of the present volume. James is exhibited as being in considerable confusion of mind. On the one hand we find the reiterated assertion that the conditions of the English stage are so revolting that "one would be unpardonable for going to meet them if one's inspiration were not exclusively mercenary". From this source flows an increasing stream of disenchantment with English society of large, the upper class, as "rotten and collapsible" as the French aristocracy before the revolution, and the populace is coarse and brutal beyond belief. On the other hand is a pessimism which James desperately tries to nourish in himself to the effect that he is really fanned to be a dramatist even though he feels everything about the Theatre to be detestable. To Stevenson - to whom more than to anybody else he writes seriously on the writer's art - he declares (only a month after the Comptons have begun trucking *The American*, already much adulterated, round the

provinces): "I feel as if I had at last found my form - my real one - that for which pale imitation is an ineffectual substitute."

Fortunately, if horribly, this nonsense about himself and about the Novel was blown into Limbo when *Guy Domville* was damned (it only by the many-headed vulgar) at the St James's Theatre on January 5, 1895. But "bruised, sickened, disgusted" though he was by the "cruel ordeal" of that first-night reception of what he called, not unjustly, his "delicate, picturesque, extremely human and extremely artistic little play", and (not so justly) "altogether the best thing" he had achieved, he seems in the light of his correspondence to have come up fighting more quickly than his sometimes less supposed. Only four days after the near-fiasco he writes to his brother William of a "simple freedom of mind" which should enable him to return to his own "legitimate form", there to find "a divine solace for everything". He has learnt that "deep and dark is the abyss of the theatre", but it is an abyss which he has plumbed, so that now he is ready to move on. It will not be quite unaccompanied by some trailing shreds of illusion. "In the air," he tells William, is a sense that his position is much more "distinguished" in consequence of *Guy Domville* than it was before. To commend this slightly nebulous attribute (regularly set within its inverted commas) is great good fortune in Henry James's world. But to be heroic is something better. And there is simple heroism in what he writes to his fellow-novelist William Dean Howells just before the end of this ghastly month of January. His "book-pony" is what counts - "and I mean to do far better work than ever I have done before."

Throughout the twelve years covered by this selection from his letters, James's centre of gravity continues, although precariously at times, to be in London. His ideally arranged existence, he says, would be five months there, five months in Italy (mainly Rome), a month in Paris, and "a month for the *impérville*". London is ceasing to strike him as so very "distinguished"; it means too much dining out and too many time-consuming invitations to country-house week-ends. At its worst, the city becomes "a big black inferno of fog, mud, drinklessness and pauperism". But the English upper class, even if rotten and callous, has not lost its fascination. In one of his long gossiping letters to Grace Norton he mentions that evening's dinner-engagement, from which he plans

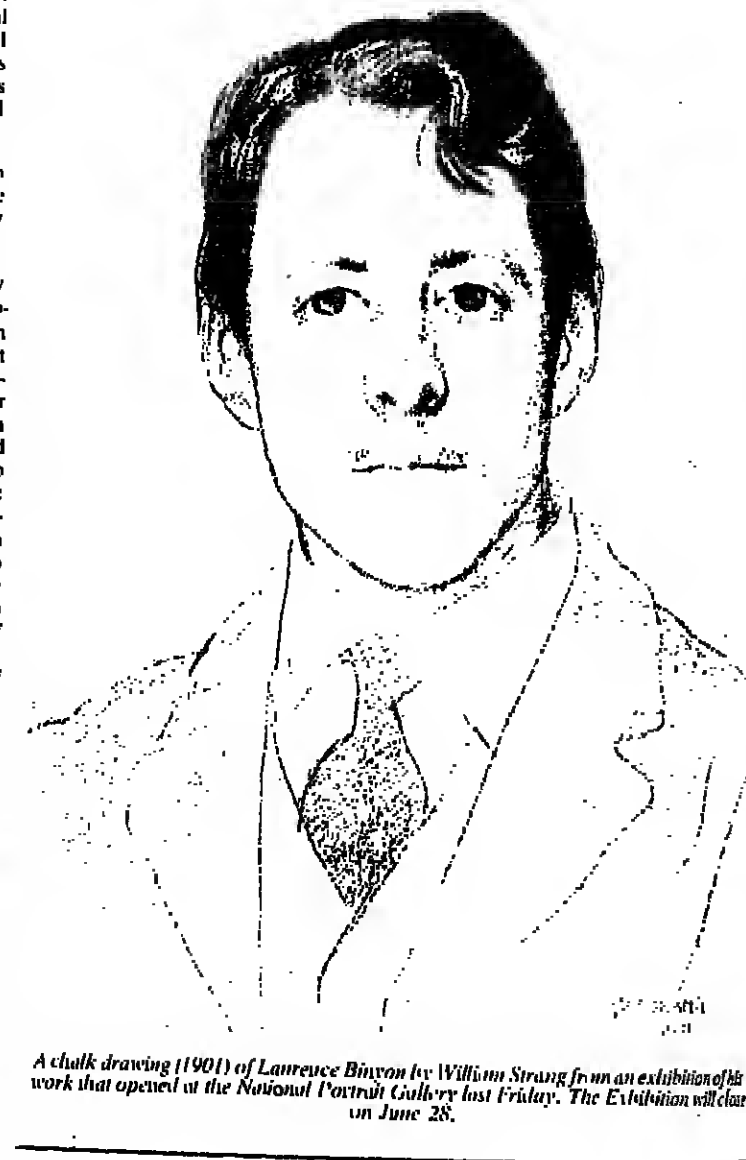
to come back at ten o'clock, in time to go to a kind of nocturnal garden-party at

Lady Ardilaun's. Tomorrow I go out to Osterley, to Lady Jersey's - a beautiful old Georgian house, of which the internal decoration, remarkably homogeneous turns, garlands, festoons, trophies etc.) is celebrated and makes it a kind of model of its class.

And the following week he will go down in Highgate, Lord Carnarvon's where he expects to be a good deal bored by "very amiable and very respectable society".

About much of this we already know from Professor Edel's copious and absorbing biography. And we already know, from the same authority, a good deal about Constance Fenimore Woolson, the expatriate American girl-woman turned popular novelist, with whom James established in Florence in 1880 a friendship terminated only by her suicide in Venice in 1894. To this desperately devoted admirer - for she was certainly that - James was undeviatingly attentive and grateful, although in a rather wary way. They meet, he reports to Howells, "at discreet intervals", and the relationship imposes upon him, he seems to hint, the not particularly entrancing duty of reading her books. Her middle name celebrated the fact that she was a grandniece of James Fenimore Cooper, and although it is improbable that he ever addressed her as other than Miss Woolson, it is regularly as Fenimore that he refers to her in his correspondence with others. There is a very faint flavour of mockery about this, much increased when she becomes "our good Fenimore". (In a letter to Stevenson in 1892, not included in the present selection, there is a reference to "the good little Thomas Hardy", who has published in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* a novel "chock-full of faults and falsity".) James and Miss Woolson appear to have agreed to destroy each other's letters, but Professor Edel has come upon four of Miss Woolson's letters to him being very little catalogued with the William James correspondence. They are of considerable interest, and are printed for the first time in an appendix to this volume.

Miss Woolson is intelligent, vastly admiring, and capable of times of sharp mockery. James has declared one of her letters to be full of "amiable elements" and she pounces on this, saying she doesn't think a letter could be described in a more depressing way. She understands that James has no wish to know "the little literary women", so it is fortunate that she isn't even that, but really "a sort of... admiring aunt". It is in this character, one supposes, that she wishes him a "sweet young American wife". In his



A chalk drawing (1901) of Laurence Binyon by William Strang from an exhibition of his work that opened at the National Portrait Gallery last Friday. The Exhibition will close on June 28.

novels he doesn't make it sufficiently evident that his heroes are in love with the hemlines - and why doesn't he give us a woman for whom we can feel a real love? The fourth letter ends:

The lagoons, the Piazzetta, and the little still canals all send their love to you. They wish you were here. And so do I. I would go by in a gondola, you know, and see you on Mrs B.'s balcony. That would be... something. Good bye.

It is clear that James had a tricky streak in his brain, and improbable that Miss Woolson, who found undraped statues difficult, understood the nature of what Professor Edel calls homoerotic love. James must have recoiled with pain at faintly suspecting estimate of Fenimore, and was surprised that she was acute enough to be aware of it. He had been gullible of Fenimore's relationship - and that, to him, was a very terrible thing.

Meanwhile, those gods and goddesses in the Vatican and the Uffizi had been replicated all over Europe. And here - in tracing the cult of antique (or re-antique) marbles during the course of the eighteenth century - Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny really come into their own. Their footnotes are scattered with allusions.

It was in 1799 that Lord Elgin set out as ambassador to Constantinople, determined to bring back casts, drawings and specimens of Greek antiquities to celebrate "the progress of taste in England". The "eldest object from the Acropolis", he wrote, "is a jewel". His marbles began to arrive in London in 1803. Four years later they went on show. The fashionable world flocked to see these fragments of old Greece, displayed in a "damp, dirty penthouse" near the top of Piccadilly. Later they were moved to the courtyard of Burlington House. Later still they went to the British Museum. John Flaxman took one look and exclaimed: "The Venus de Medici!" for ever compared with the "Thebes" he told W.R. Hamilton, the "Apollo Belvedere" was a more dancing marble. His own master Canova, the greatest sculptor in Europe, refused point blank even to consider restoration: it would be sacrilege for any man to touch them with a chisel. "The naked figures", he said, "are real flesh, to its native beauty." Benjamin West called them "sublime" and wished he was forty years younger. Prize-fighters posed by them. Mr Siddons, wife, Benjamin Robert Haydon was moved to ecstasy: "That combination of nature and idea, which I felt yearning to be, was before me, and I felt myself insufficient to keep it alive."

I heard the birds with a quiet rapture flooding my soul, and an ineffable gladness pervading my whole being. There came the dawn, some of a relationship to other and higher things. I had never before felt. Yet I felt no repining, and never thought it a hardship to go back to mould-running and the stifling atmosphere of the hot stove. But while there, I saw a youth walking among the garden paths reading a book. As it was Good Friday, and the father's grocer shop was shut up for the day, I supposed he had the leisure to be pleased. Now, I had acquired a strong passion for reading, and the sight of that youth reading at his own free will, forced upon my mind a sense of painful contrast between his position and mine. I felt a sudden, strange, sense of what birds and sunshine, in contrast with my work had failed to impress upon me, the beauty of this reading youth accompanied with still bitterness. I went back to my mould-running and hot stove with my first anguish in my heart.

I must have got over it, however, in time," he adds. "It is rare for youths to nurse melancholy." He had the hours of darkness, after all, he had a candle, and he found the books.

Of the many moving passages in this unjustly neglected masterpiece (which Arnold Bennett studied carefully for his portrait of Daniel Claydon, though he

The canon of the classical

By J. Mordaunt Crook

FRANCIS HASKELL and NICHOLAS PENNY
Taste and the Antique
375pp. Yale University Press. £20.
0 300 10261 2

On July 20, 1798 a triumphal procession entered Paris. It was the fourth anniversary of the Fall of Robespierre. There were songs, and speeches, and martial music. But the heroes and heroines of the procession were neither warriors nor statesmen nor royalty. They were the gods and goddesses of the ancient world, immortalized in bronze and marble, treasured and venerated for more than two thousand years. For this was the Triumph of the Antique. From Napoleon himself the word had gone forth: bring back the art of Italy. And here, before the crowds in the Champ de Mars, in Imperial Rome, packaged to make a sort of Græco-Roman "bronze" strongly supported by William Wilkins and "Albanian" Aberdeen. Before the marbles had even been unpacked, Payne Knight called across to Lord Elgin at a dinner in 1806: "You have lost your labour, my Lord Elgin, your marbles are overrated; they are not Greek; they are Roman of the time of Hadrian." That Hadrianic tag was an error dating back to Dr Jacob Spon. Soon it hung like an albatross round Payne Knight's neck. Later he changed the ground of his attack, from chronology to quality. But the damage had been done. Not until 1816 - partly on the testimony of foreign experts like Visconti and Canova - did the English government belatedly agree to purchase the marbles for the nation, largely to prevent their going abroad. Hayden noted in his diary: "This year the Elgin Marbles were bought and produced an Acra in public feeling." Next year he introduced "Thebes" to John Keats.

Elgin emerged from the affair bankrupt and broken. But he had helped to initiate a radical transformation in European taste. Hazlitt, for one, rejoiced: the presence of the Elgin Marbles in London, he predicted, will "lift the Fine Arts out of the limbo of vanity and affectation, in which they have lain sprawling and fluttering, gasping for breath, wasting away, rapid and abortive". So much for the "Antinous". Here, certainly, was a cultural watershed, the seeds of a second Renaissance. The first Renaissance had sprung from the rediscovery of ancient Rome, the second stemmed from the rediscovery of ancient Greece. In 1815 the Louvre had to surrender the "Venus de Medici". But in 1821 it acquired the "Venus de Milo".

James Adam chose the "Apollon" as one of the statues for the dining room at Syon; its pose seemed "the most agreeable attitude that could be confined in the niche". There was already a miniature version on a chimney-piece in Spencer House, and there was soon to be a full-sized copy in Thomas Hope's gallery at Deepdale. At Holkham Hall, Norfolk, and Croome Court, Worcestershire, plaster casts of the "Canopus" and "Laocöon" were given a special place in the great hall at Houghton. At Blenheim there is still one version of the "Arctonion", and another of the "Venus de Medici", both in bronze. At Chatsworth there is a "Minerva Ostendensis", a "Farnese Hercules", a "Fauo with Kid", an "Aristides", a "Germanicus", and a "Celestial Venus". At Stourhead, Wiltshire, the same Venus de Medici is married with the "Callipygus Venus". At Chatsworth the "Apollo Belvedere" is paired with the "Diane Cluserienne", just as they were in the gallery at Duchesse Street, London. In the gallery at Woburn, Bedfordshire, there is one "Mercury" and another of Keats' "The Wild Boar" at Chatsworth; another at Grimsthorpe Park, York.

my mind and I knew that they would at last raise the rest of Europe from its slumber in the darkness". His companion, Henry Fuseli, the Swiss master of the Sublime, was overwhelmed: "he strode about saying 'De Oreks were godeal de Oreks were godeal'..."

That well-known episode is worth repeating. For not everybody agreed at first. The "Venus de Medici" still had her admirers. The artists were on Elgin's side. Chantrey, Lawrence, Westmacott, Rossi and Nolletts all supported him. It was the connoisseurs who cast doubt on the value of the marbles. Trained in the appreciation of Ideal Forms, they rejected the naturalism of the Parthenon marbles; collectors of Roman and Græco-Roman figures, they spurned the simplified sculptures of the Greeks. They preferred the "Apollo Belvedere" to the "Thebes", wagon after wagon rolled the relics of Imperial Rome, packaged to make a sort of Græco-Roman "bronze" strongly supported by William Wilkins and "Albanian" Aberdeen. Before the marbles had even been unpacked, Payne Knight called across to Lord Elgin at a dinner in 1806: "You have lost your labour, my Lord Elgin, your marbles are overrated; they are not Greek; they are Roman of the time of Hadrian." That Hadrianic tag was an error dating back to Dr Jacob Spon. Soon it hung like an albatross round Payne Knight's neck. Later he changed the ground of his attack, from chronology to quality. But the damage had been done. Not until 1816 - partly on the testimony of foreign experts like Visconti and Canova - did the English government belatedly agree to purchase the marbles for the nation, largely to prevent their going abroad. Hayden noted in his diary: "This year the Elgin Marbles were bought and produced an Acra in public feeling." Next year he introduced "Thebes" to John Keats.

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shire; and another in the Derby Arboretum. The "Capitoline Faun" appears in marble at Westworth Woodhouse; in plaster at Holkham and Croome. There are versions on a chimney-piece at Saltram, Devon, and much decayed on the attic of the Phillimore Hall, Islington. Even the gurgulent "Nile" reappears in miniature form on the pedestal of Thomas Banks's Westcott monument at St Paul's.

The "Medici Vase" and the "Borghese Vase" appear together in bronze at Osterley and in alabaster at Houghton. There are no less than sixteen marble copies of the "Medici Vase" at Woburn and many more, in cast iron, at Alton Towers, Staffordshire. Bartolini's version in the oratory at Chatsworth also does duty as a lamp-standard. "Meleager" adorns the skyline at Lyme Park in Cheshire; and reappears again in Robert Adam's great hall at Kedleston. Bronze versions of "Silenus with the Infant Bacchus" can be found inside the sculpture gallery at Petworth; outside the sculpture gallery at Woburn; and most effectively in Valadier's version in the ante-room at Syon. The "Dying Gladiator" reappears in stone (by Scheemakers) at Rousham; in marble (by Verelst) at Wilton; and most memorably in bronze, by Valadier, in the great hall at Syon. Scheemakers made a stone copy of the "Lion Attacking a Horse" for Rousham. Nolletts made marble copies of "Castor and Pollux" for Shugborough Park, Staffordshire, where they joined casts of the "Furietti Centaurs". In London those same centaurs flanked a cast of the "Medici Vase" in the staircase vestibule of the Royal Academy. The "Farnese Cupid" was compressed into a chimney-piece at Northumberland House. Rysbrack made a copy of the "Farnese Flora" for the Pantheon at Stourhead. Wyon even turned her into a symbol for an agricultural prize medal. "Cael Juvos" supplied the model for Sir Joshua Reynolds's Fortitude in the window he designed for New College Chapel, Oxford. The "Marte Ceres" turned up in marble at Chatsworth, and in basalt in the Fitzwilliam Museum. Poor Ceres, in fact, often did duty as a gas-lamp in Victorian London.

And so the parchment goes on. The much-restored "Zingara" simpson today on a chimney-piece at Powderham; also slippers too in the library ante-room at Stourhead. And the "Dancing Faun" still dances in bronze at Blenheim; in marble at Westworth Woodhouse. The "Thebes" still write in the landscape at Studley Royal. In the entrance hall of the Athenaeum, Dinne de Gubies' still greets arriving members; the "Apollo Belvedere" still guards the staircase; and, outside, the "Pallas of Veitelli" (glided in recent times, and presented with a spear) stands sentinel over the entrance to clubland's academy. Not all the replicas, of course, were equally austere. The "Hermaphrodite" spins today, roily as ever on its quilted bed; in marble at Falworth; in bronze at West Wycombe Park, where its pudende doubles amused the Hell Fire Club. Rather more chastely "Cleopatra" continues to gaze out across the lake from her shady grotto at Stourhead. "Cupid and Psyche" are still entwined at Cobham in Kent, and at Ickworth in Suffolk. "Marcus Aurelius" rides again on Chambers's triumphal arch at Westminster. And "Curtius", headstrong as ever, is still flinging himself into the gulf in the great hall at Wilton.

Even after the eclipse of Rome by Greece, such echoes of the Vatican and the Uffizi continued to reverberate in the halls of our great museums. Bassei planned to include versions of the "Celestial Venus", the "Dying Gladiator", "Cleopatra", and "Canopus" in the entrance hall of the Fitzwilliam. Barry envisaged "Alexander and Bucephalus" on the Schinkel placed them on the skyline of his Altes Museum in Berlin. Smirke even hoped to install copies of "The Wrestlers" and the "Laocöon" on the steps of the British Museum. But as the nineteenth century progressed, the image of ancient Rome began to wither. The taste of the Romantics was first Greek, then Medieval. And this shift in taste, this devaluing of Rome and all its symbols, is an aspect of cultural history which has yet

to be properly explained. The development of Ruskin's attitudes, for instance, might supply a clue.

When the young Ruskin - trained on a diet of casts and copies - first visited Rome and Florence in 1840, he could hardly avoid being impressed by "the extraordinary differences between the usual casts and copies of the *Laocöon* and the *Apollo*... and the originals

.... Instead of coming to the *Belvedere*, as to a known hackneyed form I started at it as if I had never seen it in my life. And the *Venus*, usually in her casts a foolish little schoolgirl, is one of the purest and most elevated incarnations of womanhood conceivable". In 1843 Ruskin still respected the "Apollo Belvedere" as a representation of ideal truth. But by 1846 he had come to consider that same Apollo hopelessly "unspiritual". By then he much preferred "the calmness of the *Elia Thersites*" to "the convulsions of the *Laocöon*". Indeed the "Laocöon" seemed "a subject ill-chosen, meanly conceived, and unnaturally treated, recommended to imitation by subtleties of execution and accumulation of technical knowledge". In fact, "no group has exercised so pernicious an influence on art as this". By 1856 Ruskin could tell Charles Eliot Norton that the "Apollo Belvedere" was "a public nuisance". By 1880 the "Venus de Medici" had dwindled into "an uninteresting little person", and so for "The Arctonion" - that "wonderful gobbler" - it seemed not only a "nuisance" but irredeemably "vulgar". In fact in 1880 it required something of an effort for Ruskin to recall that the Tribune in the Uffizi - "not the size of a railway waiting-room" - had "actually for the last century determined the taste of the European public in two arts".

The canon of classical taste had turned out to be a mirage. Even so, Ruskin never lost sight of the value of authority in art; the necessity for the existence of some yardstick of excellence, some aesthetic absolute by which to measure contemporary creation. "Respect for the ancients", he had written in 1842, "is the salvation of art, though it sometimes blinds us to its ends. It increases the power of the painter, though it diminishes his liberty; and if it be sometimes an incubator to the essays of invention, it is often a protection from the consequences of audacity. The whole system and discipline of art, the collected results of the experience of ages, might, but for the fixed authority of antiquity, be swept away by the rage of fashion, or lost in the glare of novelty; and the knowledge which has taken centuries to accumulate, the principles which mighty minds had arrived at only in dying, might be overturned by the frenzy of a faction, and abandoned in the insolence of an hour."

That was well said. But during Ruskin's own lifetime, the industrial process had gone far to undermine the tangible authority of the antique. From marble, through bronze, to lead, plaster and terracotta; and thence, from electrolyte to porcelain and papier mâché: replication had become multiplication. Antique sculpture had slipped, and slipped badly, from the salon to the suburb. The cult of the antique, the prestige of Renaissance art, had always depended, at least in part, on scarcity and inaccessibility. When the fun went out of the game, and the Acropolis began to look elsewhere, in the days of Brasseuse College Oxford, destroyed a copy of "Cala and Abdi" by Giamblonga which had graced their quadrangle since 1727. Walter Pater, then college Fellow in Classics, seems to have raised no objection.

E. Arntzen and R. Rainwater's *Guide to the Literature of Art History* (655pp. The Art Book Company, 91 Great Russell Street, London WC1E 6ES. 0 953109 05 7) is a bibliography compiled for the purposes of reference and research. It was developed from *Chambers's Guide to Art Reference Books* and is double the length of its predecessor, containing as well as the reference material, the most important works in each of the arts arranged by period and region. It is divided into four sections: General Reference Sources - Bibliographies, Reference Sources and Materials for the Study of Art History - Primary Sources, Histories and Handbooks; The Individual Arts - Books and other works of Reference and Serials.

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London WC2 01-836 4710

The mould-runner's story

By Paul Bailey

CHARLES SHAW
When I was a Child
Introduction by John Burnet
159pp. Corgi Books. £4.50.
0 90435 427

Charles Shaw's extraordinary autobiography originated in a series of unsigned articles published in the *Staffordshire Sentinel* in the early 1890s. A decade passed before *When I was a Child* appeared under the pseudonym "An Old Potter". Although its author died in 1906 in poverty, it is safe to assume that he was happy at the end of his long life. His book is a tribute to his optimistic tone, its confidence in the new century as one in which the horrors he endured throughout his childhood would never recur.

Shaw was born in 1832, in Tunstall in the Potteries. He received his education, in reading and knitting, from old Betty W., a local widow who maintained school within the walls of her humble cottage. By the time he was seven, he could read the Bible and knit his own stockings. Thanks to Betty's growing, he was able to approach works enthusiastically when he studied them for acceptance for fourteen pence in hand labour. Shaw's study was a tiny box-room, containing a desk, two bookshelves, and a small iron stove, all purchased out of his meagre savings. "I don't know what it is," he writes seriously on the writer's art, "but I know when I entered this little room at night I was in a different world." It was there that he discovered Robinson Crusoe, Klopstock's *Messiah*, Rollin's *Antient*

History, and Gillilan's *Birds of the Bible* among many others.

He was put out to earn his living in 1839, when he was seven. His wages were a shilling for a six-day week. As a mould-runner at the pot-works, he was expected to dart back and forth from the plate-maker to the stove-runner with the plaster moulds in which the newly shaped plates would soon dry and harden about the flames: "... nothing less than running would do. A boy would be kept going for twenty minutes or half-an-hour at a time, the perspiration coursing down his face and back, making channels on both, and if some curious system of irrigation were going on upon the surface of this small piece of humanity. After a year as a mould-runner, he went to another pot-works as a handle-maker. His master "was a veteran in drinklessness", although only twenty-five. It is typical of Shaw that he can write about this sullen, callous brute with a measured compassion: "He is a swart, as many chroniclers of the lives of the Victorian poor are not, of the roots of that callousness and brutality. It isn't often that the recipient of blows and beatings is capable of describing his tormentor in words that solicit sympathy and forgiveness."

Charles Shaw's account of his grim upbringing is remarkable for its genuine cheerfulness. When *When I was a Child* closes, appropriately, with a quotation from his beloved Wordsworth. Shaw knows what he means to be surprised by Joy. The small pleasures of his childhood loom large in his narrative. He recalls how he got through each endless week while he knitted in Sunday, and the delights of Sunday school. It was in one such that he was instructed, of his mother and father Shaw says very little, but the family's localisation in Chell, the local workhouse, is extremely detailed and extremely moving. It shows his honest and diligent parents as helpless victims, in common with hundreds of others.

Of the many moving passages in this unjustly neglected masterpiece (which Arnold Bennett studied carefully for his portrait of Daniel Claydon, though he

loneliness: "He had given me a drawing interest in a larger world than I had ever dreamed of. Like the blind man in the Gospel, I had begun to 'see men as trees walking'. I had not forsworn many questions, but I had been made to feel there were many questions whose answers surpassed my interest in them."

"When I was a Child" takes Shaw to his twenty-first birthday and his acceptance into the ministry. It merely hints at the achievements its author was to know in his mature years, mostly as a minister in the Methodist New Connection, but also as a leader-writer for the *Oldham Express*. Its scope is limited for a distinct purpose - to tell its readers of the great improvements that English society had undergone since the 1830s and 40s. As John Burnet points out in his informative introduction, the book, for all the remembered happiness it takes pains to convey, is not an exercise in nostalgia: implicit on almost every page is the message that no child of the present or the future should ever have to suffer what Shaw suffered.

There are vivid portraits in the autobiography: - of the great Joseph Capper, and his role in the Reform agitation; of Thomas Cooper, and the events leading to his imprisonment; of a poor, broken man known as "Owd Rafe", attempting for "reky laker" (roast potatoes) for his "breikka" (breakfast). Of his mother and father Shaw says very little, but the family's localisation in Chell, the local workhouse, is extremely detailed and extremely moving. It shows his honest and diligent parents as helpless victims, in common with hundreds of others.

Of the many moving passages in this unjustly neglected masterpiece (which Arnold Bennett studied carefully for his portrait of Daniel Claydon, though he

never acknowledged his indebtedness to me mention two. When the young Shaw finally released from the workhouse, he goes happily off to Sunday school, where the boys move away from him. He is in the class - in awful isolation - because he is wearing workhouse clothes. His mother makes do with what he is told. The other passage describes his first awareness of the ill-effects of dog food. He is walking in Woorlock Gardens, one beautiful Good Friday, at the age of seven, on a errand for the plate-maker.

I heard the birds with a quiet rapture flooding my soul, and an ineffable gladness pervading my whole being. There came the dawn, some of a relationship to other and higher things. I had never before felt. Yet I felt no repining, and never thought it a hardship to go back to mould-running and the stifling atmosphere of the hot stove. But while there, I saw a youth walking among the garden paths reading a book. As it was Good Friday, and the father's grocer shop was shut up for the day, I supposed he had the leisure to be pleased. Now, I had acquired a strong passion for reading, and the sight of that youth reading at his own free will, forced upon my mind a sense of painful contrast between his position and mine. I felt a sudden

Group portrait of the mind

By Stephen Stich

LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN
Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology
Volume 1. Edited by G.E.M. Anscombe
and G.H. von Wright.
218pp. £16.50.
0 631 12541 8
Volume 2. Edited by G.H. von Wright
and Keltki Nymann.
143pp. £13.50.
0 631 12551 5
Oxford: Blackwell.

Think of a representation of a face from
in front and in profile at the same time,
as in some modern pictures. A repre-
sentation in which a movement, an al-
teration, a roving of one's glance, are
included. Does such a picture *not* really
represent what one sees? (I, 968)

There is a certain similarity between the
nearby two thousand epigrams collected in
these volumes and the elegant, enigmatic
cubist paintings of Picasso, Braque and
Gris. Like the Cubists, Wittgenstein con-
structs his picture from fragments drawn
from differing perspectives. Topics that
have been the focus of attention are sud-
denly dropped, only to reappear later,
illuminated by a vivid metaphor or an
unexpected analogy. As with many Cubist
canvases, the whole work is a nesting of
puzzles. Dark musings are interspersed
with arresting insights, rhetorical questions
and disorienting thought-experiments. It is
left to the reader to assemble the pieces
into a coherent picture. Often just as we
seem to have a bit in focus, the pieces
come unstuck and collapse into a jumble
of fragments. There is a robust, poetic
beauty to many of Wittgenstein's remarks,
and occasionally they afford us a brief
insight into the mind or character of the
man who, more than any other, set the
agenda for twentieth-century philosophy in
the English-speaking world.

Wittgenstein's picture of the mind is a
group portrait. The figures in the fore-
ground are our everyday psychological
concepts: thinking and meaning, believing,
remembering, seeing, dreaming, and
imagining. Other common-sense psycho-
logical notions, including pain, hope, sor-
row, fear, and anxiety, get a sketchier
treatment. The recurrent central theme of
Wittgenstein's remarks is that our
psychological terms do not pick out
categories of private, inner episodes to
which only the subject has direct access.
Rather, the correct application of these
terms turns on a complex array of facts
about a person: his behaviour and environ-
ment, his level of maturation, his under-
standing of linguistic practice and social
convention, the way he is embedded in his
society, and the extent to which his society
resembles our own.

How could human behaviour be
described? Surely only by showing the
actions of a variety of humans, as they
are all mixed up together. Not what one

man is doing now, but the whole hurly-
burly, is the background against which
we see an action, and it determines our
judgment, our concepts, and our reac-
tions. (II, 629)

"It is as if our concepts involved a scal-
doling of facts." That would presumably
mean: If you imagine certain facts
otherwise, describe them otherwise, than
the way they are, then you can no
longer imagine the application of certain
concepts, because the rules for their
application have no analogue in the new
circumstances. (II, 392)

Consider, for example, the way we apply
such terms as "pain" and "sorrow".

Pain-behaviour and the behaviour of
sorrow—These can only be described
along with their external occasions. (If
the child's mother leaves it alone it may
cry because it is sad; if it falls down,
from pain.)

Perhaps someone will say: How can
you characterize the concept "pain" by
referring to the occasions on which pain
occurs? Pain, after all, is what it is,
whatever causes it!—But ask: How does
one identify pain? The occasion deter-
mines the usefulness of the signs of pain.
The concept of pain is simply embedded
in our life in a certain way.

Only surrounded by certain normal
manifestations of life, is there such a
thing as an expression of pain. Only sur-
rounded by even more far-reaching par-
ticular manifestations of life, such as the
expression of sorrow or affection. (II,
148-51)

Or consider hope.
Someone says: "Man hopes." How
should this phenomenon of natural his-
tory be described?—One might observe
a child and wait until one day he mani-
fests hope; and then one could say
"Today he hoped for the first time". But
surely that sounds queer! Although it
would be quite natural to say "Today he
said 'I hope' for the first time". And
why queer? One does not say that a
sneezing hopes that... but one does
say it of a grown-up.—Well, but by his
daily life becomes clear that there is a
place for hope in it. (II, 15)

To make matters more complex, there is
no single collection of facts about the in-
dividual and his society to be paired with
each psychological concept. Instead,
psychological concepts are applied to a
range of quite different cases sharing no
element in common. Our concept of think-
ing illustrates the point nicely.

Where do we get the concept 'thinking'
from, which we now want to consider
here? From everyday language. What
first fixes the direction of our attention is
the word "thinking". But the use of this
word is tangled. Nor can we expect any
thing else. And that can of course be
said of all psychological verbs. (II, 20)

Now imagine that someone has to con-
struct something with blocks, or 'Me-
cano'. He tries out different pieces, tries
to combine them, maybe even makes a
sketch, etc., etc. Now one says that he
has been thinking during this activity!
(II, 7)

We say, "Think about what you want to
say before you speak". One way of
doing this is to recite one's speech slowly
to oneself, or to write it down and make
corrections. (II, 10)

"I thought: 'this stick is too long, I must
try another one'." While thinking that
maybe I said nothing at all to myself,
maybe one or two words. And yet this
report is not untrue. (II, 13)

If we include 'thinking silently as one is
working' in our considerations, then we
see that our concept 'thinking' is widely
ramified. Like a ramified traffic network
which conceals many out-of-the-way
places with each other.

Wittgenstein's emphasis on the social
and environmental components of our
common-sense psychological concepts
should give pause both to behaviourists,
who see Wittgenstein as a kindred spirit,
and to cognitivists whose paradigm has
come to dominate recent experimental
psychology. Behaviourists commonly urge
that talk about mental states and processes
can be translated into talk about
behaviour. But if Wittgenstein is right,
then no such translation is feasible. If
psychological concepts are interwoven with
social and environmental notions, then no

translation purely in terms of behaviour
will do. Moreover, the ramified complexity
of common-sense psychological concepts
suggests that no discursive definition is
possible at all. On this last point, oddly
enough, Wittgenstein finds common
ground with recent work in artificial in-
telligence which argues that if we are to have
a detailed and accurate account of
common-sense knowledge and concepts,
we will need the resources of computer
languages, and our description will be in
the form of a computer program.

Cognitivists, in contrast to behaviour-
ists, have no illusions about translating
mental terms into behaviours. Nor do
they view the impossibility of such transla-
tions as a reason to abjure mentalistic vo-
cabulary. Thus they ruminally cast their
theories in terms drawn from common-
sense psychology: "thought", "memory",
"belief", "plan", "image", etc. Also, they
conceive of their theories as characteriz-
ing—albeit abstractly and functionally—
what is going on in the heads of their
subjects. However, Wittgenstein's
exploration of the social and environ-
mental strands in our common-sense
psychological concepts bodes ill for the
cognitivist project. "Belief", "thought" and
the rest, at least as they are commonly
used, just do not refer to goings-on in the
head which can be characterized in isola-
tion from the subject's social and physical
environment. Much the same point has
been rediscovered in recent years by Kap-
lan, Perry, Burge and others.

Wittgenstein repeatedly stresses that his
purpose is to describe psychological
phenomena, not to explain them. His
motivation is largely therapeutic. When "we
make a wrongly simplified picture of our
conceptual world" (I, 803) we are led
down the garden path to the conceptual
traps of scepticism. There can be no quar-
relling with a lack of interest in explana-
tion and theory when it reflects no more
than a personal taste or individual
priorities. But in some of his darkest and
most troubling passages, Wittgenstein sug-
gests that there may be no physiological
correlates of psychological events and pro-
cesses. His point is not merely that
psychological processes do not reduce to
physiological processes. This much would
follow from the social and environmental
entanglements of the mental. Rather he
seems to be saying that physiology may
play no role, that no physiological process
could intervene between stimulus and
behaviour.

No supposition seems to me more
natural than that there is no process in
the brain correlated with associating or
with thinking; so it would be impossible
to read off thought-processes from brain
processes. I mean this if I talk or write
there is, I assume, a system of impulses
going out from my brain and correlated
with my spoken or written thoughts. But
why should the system continue further
in the direction of the centre? Why
should this order not proceed, so to
speak, out of chaos? (I, 903)

I saw this man years ago: now I have
seen him again. I recognize him, I
remember his name. And why does
there have to be a cause of this remem-
bering in my nervous system? Why must
something or other, whatever it may be,
be stored-up there in *my form*? Why
must a trace have been left behind?
Why should there not be a psychological
regularity to which no physiological regu-
larity corresponds? If this question
they were upset. (I, 905)

Why should not the initial and terminal
states of a system be connected by a
natural law, which does not cover the
intermediate state? (I, 909)

... But you would never talk like that,
if you were examining the behaviour of
a machine!—Well, you may say that a liv-
ing creature, an animal body, is a
machine in this sense. (I, 916)

Many of Wittgenstein's admirers, myself
among them, will have little sympathy with
the mystic villain hinted at in these
remarks. I cannot, however, be dismissed
as a momentary aberration. The vitalistic
theme emerges again and again in Wit-
genstein's writings and in the work of his
followers. Moreover, John Searle, who is
certainly no Wittgensteinian, has recently
been urging a sort of vitalism of his own.
Perhaps those of us who thought that the
life had been fought and won will have to
think again.



commentary

Novel Serenity with her husband P. R. Leavis; she gave a lecture at the Cheltenham Festival of Literature on "The Englishness of the English Novel." The talk has now been published in the Spring 1981 issue of *New University Quarterly* (115 pp. Basil Blackwell, £4.95. ISBN 0307 8612).

As its title suggests, this lecture is characteristically nationalistic. It is indeed provincial - in its view of the conditions in which great novel-writing coöccurs, though in this, like Quigley England, for example in referring to Camus's shift "from irresponsible solipsism to full humanism" between *L'Étranger* and *La Peste*, in her search for novels which offer "a balanced and responsible enquiry into the human condition, its problems being recognised to be both social and psychological." Mrs Leavis ranges over the assurance throughout the English tradition, though in the last year of her life she hardly found nothing to praise in what was then

A Poem about Angels

You want to write a poem about angels.
Not because they are winged and white and lulled
And in many paintings very beautiful
But because you have seen many things and remembered
Only angels. You are certain for example
That you walked on famous streets,
Under towers, over rivers, around the parapets
Of ancient walls, medieval walls.

Once, you watched bees turn to nuptials
From a moving train, and every time you looked,
Another season. Surely, there were mountains
By the side of the road. You wrote it down.

Only the angels are intact, marbled
Or otherwise, recorded, you imagine, before breakfast.
Maybe before dawn by some lucky visionary
With a printbrush. You believed especially
The story of the man who fell asleep and woke
To find his Mary finished by the angels.
You would like to know those thorough angels
With names like Gabriel, the cherubim, the seraphim.

All you know is how impossible it is
Without them. The statues can't breathe against you
With their heavy clouds, and everything through glass
Or, worse, that creaking memory, flushing tents
And candles between the high pink tulle
Of was it Tuscany or if the slides you never took
Got not mixed up, fully ornamental, the empty screen
For you to fill with all your angels.

In the dim church, a darker patch of wall,
The handiwork of angels. A free
Mure gentle than the finished circle
Of a moon altering your empyrean,
Unhinging buildings from their heavy sinews.

The angels could help you with anything.
They could show you how to use a word like dream
Or I in the middle of a poem, pressing you
With secrets like their old friends.
Prophets, patriarchs and kings.

Still, they're busy with gardening
And God to deal with who is old
And must be disappointed. I suppose
The scenery gets dull, if you're
An angel. All that cloud and pearl.
There aren't chariots of fire
Every day, you know, and it's a long time
Between appearances in dreams.

One night, they are gathered on a cloud.
A moon, completed, rises, catches them off guard
And before they think that is another month
And I have done nothing, one rises, Gabriel,
Look Gabriel. And Gabriel, transformed,
Puts down his harp, which has been playing
Only mechanically for the last two weeks,
And home a long-treasured pain.

Jacqueline Osherow

Winner of the Silver Pen Award
for the most outstanding book written in English
and published in England during 1980

DANTE the Maker

WILLIAM ANDERSON

Mr Anderson's study has received universal acclaim. Kathleen Raine, in the *Faber*, calls it 'outstandingly excellent' for whoever wants to read Dante with understanding and in use the poem as the support for a spiritual journey.

0 7100 9322 6, 108

Routledge & Kegan Paul
39 Store Street, London WC1

RKP

Thin is beautiful

By Carol Rumens

SHEILA MACLEOD
The Art of Starvation
190pp. Virago. £5.95. (Paperback, £2.95)
0 86068 164 5

In a recent survey, one in every 200 adolescent girls was shown to have suffered from anorexia nervosa. Originally more widespread in the upper social reaches, it is now increasing among working class girls. Older women are not, as used to be thought, immune; nor are men. Is the disease simply a reaction to the invasion of our lives by the commercial mythology of gilded youth (forever panting, but not from overweight)? Or is its source in the individual within the family? Sheila MacLeod, while not discounting the former possibility, comes down strongly on the side of the latter, citing evidence from her personal history and quoting such radical thinkers on psychiatric illness as Thomas Szasz. Her conclusion is, roughly, that when a person is defined by others in a way which conflicts with his or her own self-image, anorexia can be one of the defence mechanisms that the mind sets in action. Other theories, including the 'slimming disease' notion of popular psychology, or the more sophisticated interpretation of anorexia as a revolt against sexuality, contain some truth, but fail to take into account the 'positive strategy' that the apparently destructive act, however misguided, embodies.

Should a writer best known as a novelist should choose to treat so important and personal an experience not in fiction but in terms of documentary and thesis suggests that she may be engaged on a certain crusade. As the anorexic will away extraneous flesh, so MacLeod carefully strips away the myths, setting expert opinion and private suffering in fruitful counterpoint. Readers interested in the novelist's version should turn to her earlier work *The Snow-White Soliloquies*, a fantasy about a girl encased in a glass

coffin, which can be seen, though the author denies any conscious intention, as a metaphor for anorexia. For all its admirable objectivity, this new investigation is also the story of a psychic journey, and many of the descriptions drawn from personal experience haunt the memory like poetry.

Sheila MacLeod was sixteen when she first suffered the loss of appetite that in a few months was to reverse her weight from a hardly enormous eight stone five to five stone eight. She was the bright elder daughter of a hardworking, respectable family from Lewis in the Outer Hebrides (they migrated to England when Sheila was five). Writing about her early childhood she interestingly compares the process, common in small communities, of naming individuals or trades (James-the-Milk for example), with the way in which fond relatives will ing a child, sometimes for life, with attributes it may not in fact possess. 'She's going to be stout—just like Oolly' remarked one of Sheila's aunts to her father (Only was her mother), provoking in the child a rage she was too 'well brought up' to express. The epithets most frequently heard, however, were the rather more intimidating ones 'good', 'clever' and 'healthy'.

In tracing the history of the disease, MacLeod raises some interesting hypotheses. For example, she suggests that during the Middle Ages anorexia may have been common among 'witnesses'. A major factor contributing to their persecution was their apparent ability to exert some control over their own and other people's physical states. Not only versed in healing and midwifery, such women were also thought to have Amenorrhoea as one course of the symptoms welcomed by the anorexic as her weight falls towards starvation level, (and in fact was once thought to be the cause of the illness).

In a later age, some cases of consumption as well as the genteel habit of 'going into a decline' may have been due to undiagnosed anorexia. In fact when it was

first identified in the seventeenth century by the English physician Richard Mead, he dubbed it 'female consumption'. MacLeod points out, investigation has made easier by the male authority of most accounts. The very fact that dominant mode of viewing the female body has been, throughout the annals, and that it rarely coincides with the female view, is itself, she suggests, a major factor in the genesis of the disease.

Though requiring the breeding ground of a patriarchal society, anorexia nervosa seems to be multiracial in descent. MacLeod charts with consummate tact her increasingly unsatisfactory relationship during childhood and adolescence, with her mother. The suggestion is that the illness thrives on misplaced concern rather than on any kind of material neglect. It certainly seems significant that it was an unprecedented act of acknowledgment by the mother of her daughter's condition that marked the turning-point in her illness. Almost casually one day in the garden, Mrs MacLeod quoted Shakespeare's 'Oh sunflower, weary of time' to her daughter, who immediately identified herself with the cold virgin of the poem. How the mother offered the girl a plan, and how, as Sheila MacLeod made herself eat, she found her feelings of nausea transformed to pleasure and satisfaction, is vividly described.

This beautifully symbolic 'our' wasn't, however, permanent. The writer's first relapse occurred some years later, and was produced, she suggests, by her unhappiness in the role of 'Miss Paul Jones, the famous rock-singer's wife'—as she then was. And she admits that she still sees anorexia nervosa as 'her' disease, and as a means of taking charge of her identity when it seems to be threatened. Obviously she has the intelligence and talent to be able to live with her anorexia, and to use it creatively. But to the onlooker, the act of starvation still seems dangerously close to the 'art of dying', that art practised by Sylvia Plath (and celebrated in 'Lady Lazarus'), in which last-minute attentiveness on the part of other people has so frightfully cruel a place.

Miracle ingredient

By M. A. Epstein

EWAN CAMERON and LINUS PAULING
Cancer and Vitamin C
236pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £5.95.
0 393 50000 4

Any book is to be welcomed which sets out to explain to the general public the problem of cancer as it affects the research scientist, the clinician, and—especially the patient. Understanding of this many-faceted disease can only reduce fear among those at risk, and, with less fear, early treatment will be sought with the consequent increased likelihood of cure or long-term remission.

The first two sections of *Cancer and Vitamin C* serve just this purpose by giving a balanced and factual account of the nature and causes of cancer and the ways in which tumours can now be treated. These parts of the book, covering some eighty-three pages, deal with the subject in such a sensible and accurate way, and in such simple and comprehensible language, that they might well form recommended reading for pre-clinical medical students receiving their first introduction to the general pathology of malignant growths.

However, the book has one fatal flaw. For, over the course of the authors, Linus Pauling, is internationally known as one of only three individuals who have ever received the Nobel Prize twice, he is equally well known for his almost obsessive preoccupation with vitamin C. It is true that one of Dr Pauling's Nobel awards was for peace rather than science, but his other prize was amply justified by his enormous scientific contributions. Furthermore, his only book on the subject, *Vitamin C and the Human Body*, was only written by a very short-handled, the unravelling of the fundamental role of DNA in the continuity of life, and thus narrowly missed meeting a third prize.

Nevertheless, it is fair to say that Dr Pauling has a mystical faith in vitamin C quite unrelated to any serious body of scientific investigation.

For many years Pauling campaigned for the virtues of vitamin C in preventing or ameliorating the effects of virus infections, yet investigators of the highest standing have uniformly failed to find either evidence for such effects, or any explanation as to how they could be mediated. More recently Pauling has held the view that vitamin C can play an important, and even sometimes a curative role in cancer therapy and has set up a foundation in California to sponsor the use of this substance in the treatment of tumours and to propagate the belief that it has striking beneficial effects. Cancer patients have been receiving vitamin C under this programme in a Scottish hospital near Loch Lomond where Pauling collaborates with his co-author Ewan Cameron, a Scottish surgeon in our National Health Service who is also Research Professor at the Linus Pauling Institute of Science and Medicine.

In the second half of the book thirty pages are devoted to an elaborate rationale for placing so much trust in vitamin C, and this is followed by a long series of anecdotal accounts of case histories and 'illustrative patients' who have benefited or even cured. This treatment seems to have been going on for ten years and it is surprising that something apparently so miraculous in cancer therapy, and with such a distinguished scientist countenancing it, should have been totally discounted by almost every expert in the field. The reason can only lie in the unsubstantiated nature of the claims which Pauling and Cameron have made. Indeed, one 'miraculous' case (pages 133 and 134) how both the powerful United States National Cancer Institute and the equally powerful American Cancer Society rejected Pauling's repeated applications for the funding of

clinical trials of vitamin C in cancer patients—and this just at the time when President Nixon was promising so hard for the 'conquest of cancer', which he was hoping might coincide with the American bicentennial celebrations. It is well known that grant applications to prestigious bodies discharging public funds for research are always carefully reviewed and assessed by leading authorities in every field relevant to the work, and if vitamin C really had the curative properties the book claims for it, it is inconceivable that those who spend their lives striving to advance the suffering of cancer should have uniformly ignored such a panacea.

Although the first part of the book could be recommended for its useful account of the cancer problem, the second part on the use of vitamin C makes the whole totally unacceptable, since it may raise hopes which are unsupported by proper scientific evidence. One wonders whom someone will write a really good layman's guide to this highly emotive subject.

Collecting Microscopes (120pp. Studio Vista. £6.95. 0 289 70882 6) by Gerard L.F. Turner is a well illustrated and useful guide for those who like to look at, as well as through, these optical instruments. Beginning with the first principles of the optics and the anatomy of the microscope, the book moves on to a study of the development of the principal kinds of microscope: simple, tripod and drum, and side-view; the author then discusses the great achievements and great instrument makers of the 19th century, and then the progress of microscopical science, culminating in a resume of the microscopical science of the 20th century. *Collecting Microscopes*, one of Christie's South Kensington Collectors Series, ends with a chapter on practical advice for the collector, and includes Christie's estimates of the auction prices likely to be realized by the instruments in the 102 illustrations. There is a full bibliography.

to the editor

We have had many inquiries from readers about the size of type currently being used in the TLS. It has in fact been adopted for technical reasons as a provisional measure, and we intend to be using a larger size of type in the very near future.

Language and Behaviourism

Sir, — As one of the behaviourists whose analysis of language Chomsky is said to have 'demolished' (P.N. Johnson-Laird, 'The whence of grammar', February 27), may I point out how badly both Chomsky and Piaget need a behavioural account of the role of the environment in shaping and maintaining verbal behaviour? Piaget's horticultural metaphor of development is as much an appeal to genetic endowment as Chomsky's innate rules of grammar. But language does not 'just grow'. What develops in the life of a child is a more and more demanding verbal environment. The universals which lead Chomsky to imagine that rules of grammar are innate are simply the uses of language in all languages people make requests, give orders, ask questions, describe objects, report events, and so on. Sentences are generated, not by speakers who apply rules, but by the contingencies of reinforcement maintained by verbal communities—contingencies which I surveyed in *Verbal Behavior*. One can dismiss the role of the environment as 'trivial'—one of Chomsky's favourite words—only by neglecting (or misunderstanding) the practical and theoretical achievements of an experimental analysis of behaviour.

B.F. SKINNER
Department of Psychology and Social Relations, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138.

Botanical Exploration

Sir, — Redmond O'Hanlon in his review of my biography of Sir Joseph Banks (March 13) suggests that I am wrong in saying that William Kerr, one of Sir Joseph's collectors, introduced *Lilium japonicum* into cultivation, and that that distinction should rightly go to Thunberg. I agree that Thunberg made the first botanical observation of the plant, or so it is generally accepted, but it was Kerr who introduced it into cultivation, and this is what I said in my book.

If Mr O'Hanlon is a student of botanical exploration he will know that a great many plants have been observed and collected, as herbarium specimens, by one man, but introduced into cultivation by another. *Davidia involuta* is one example, and perhaps more spectacular that all the Blue Poppy (*Maconopis delavayi* var. *baileyi*), which was observed by Delavay, Bailey and Forrest, but introduced into cultivation by Knapton-Ward.

I fancy that Mr O'Hanlon prefers jargon, scholarly, even ponderous biographies, but the purpose of mine, which seems to have been evident to most people, was to introduce Sir Joseph and his life to the general reader.

CHARLES LYTE
Carters Corner Place, Cowbech, Nr. Hallowam, East Sussex.

Auden

Sir, — In his review of Donald Mitchell's *Wicks and Auden in the Thirties: The Years 1936-1940* (February 27), Philip Larkin wrote as follows: 'In the last analysis, Donald Mitchell ascribes the breakdown of the partnership to Auden's increasing unavailability: "I am not sure that Auden ever wholly comprehended that while words are words, words written for transmission are something else—something different." I think this is very likely true: real poems are not meant to be read to me.'

It is with regard to the setting of an opera libretto to music that argument may be made with both author and

reviewer: Paul Bunyan, the last work in which Auden collaborated with Britten, can hardly be said to have a 'real poem' as a libretto, and two operas for which Auden provided marvellous librettos, Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* and Hans Werner Henze's *Elegy for Young Lovers*, are completely ignored. In a conversation with him on the writing of librettos and those for Britten's operas in particular, in Oxford in the last year of his life, Auden said: 'It is a great pity that Britten's operas did not have librettos written by a professional librettist such as me'.

MILO KEYNES.

3 Brunswick Walk, Cambridge.

Gout

Sir, — As someone who suffers from periodic attacks of gout, I was fascinated by Pat Rogers's 'cultural epidemiology' of gout (March 20). However, I was disappointed to find that he did not comment on, or venture to explain, one important cultural phenomenon associated with it (or at least, with my gout)—that other people find it funny. I doubt if this reaction can be explained as an embarrassed response to other people's pain—after all we don't laugh at toothache. Is it that my friends believe that I have unwittingly revealed an otherwise concealed penchant for port, roast beef, and high living in general and regard it as something of which I should be mildly ashamed?

ORENVELL WALL.
24 Fairfield Road, London N8.

Sir, — Pat Rogers provides an instructive and amusing survey of gout (March 20) but sadly omits consideration of those remedies which were the most commonly used for hundreds of years: those supplied by the hedgerows. Culpeper lists eighteen herbal cures for gout. The most popular was ground elder, which is still known in some parts as 'gout weed'. It is yet another pointer to the connection between gout and rich living—as well as being an oblique comment on prelatism—that the plant was also known as 'Bishops' weed'.

DENIS SHAW.
Clever Rectory, Parsonage Lane, Windsor, Berkshire.

The Wallace Collection

Sir, — According to the criteria of *The Good Museum's Guide* the Wallace Collection would have failed over the last three years on the grounds of a) specimen closure of public inventories b) no guide books c) temporary lighting and d) improvised display. And if the building works which have made this all unavoidable persist much beyond their present estimated completion date of December 1981 one might add e) clapped-out curtain. But as your reviewer implies (March 20) there are still some incidental attractions, such as Rambrandt, Velazquez, Rubens and Van Dyck....

JOHN INGLETON.
Director, The Wallace Collection, Manchester Square, London W1M 6BN.

Dante

Sir, — I have only recently seen William Anderson's letter (February 27) about my review of his *Dante the Maker*. I am sorry he feels I misrepresented his views about poetry by saying that the experience from which it derives, in his opinion, 'is likely to take the form, to the first instance, of a visionary message from the unconscious'. But I fear that he attaches too much weight to my use of the word 'unconscious'.

As his letter shows, I could hardly have failed to take in his points about the conscious character of the creative process. However these seemed to me a great deal less noteworthy than his insistence on the visionary character of Dante's initial experiences; and unless he believes that the visions he speaks of came to Dante from above, what else can one say but that, in the first instance, they came to him from this unconscious?

DAVID ROBÉY.
Wolfen College, Oxford OX2 6UO.

Elizabethan Notions of Heroism

Sir, — Since I think that the prevailing Elizabethan notion of heroic heroism in the 1500s was a rather coarse misunderstanding, and since I have imagined for many years that Shakespeare, in this matter, educated I think by Plutarch, thought the same, your review of Richard Loe's book on Chapman and Shakespeare by Stanley Wells interested me greatly (March 13). But it is surely a mistake to confine this discussion to the theatre. There is a sonnet for example by that man Gabriel Harvey, who speaks at times with the very voice of Ancient Pistol, which precisely encapsulates the misunderstanding of antiquity and honour which Richard Loe seems to connect principally with Chapman's first seven books of the *Imagined* (1598). Harvey's sonnet is the fourteenth of *Greene's Menial* (1592). He has been talking about famous knights. 'Ah, that Sir Humphrey Olfert should be dead! Ah, that Sir Philip Sidney should be dead!'

To live in motion, and action but: To eternize Eutychus divine: Where Plutarch's Lives: where Argonauts have: Where all Henricque wonderments occur. Oh, Oh, and Oh a thousand thousand times. That thirsty Eare might hear Archangels rimes. In 1598 Shakespeare must surely have been laughing at this kind of thing for six years, if not since his school days.

PETER LEVI.
Austins Farm, Stonesfield, Oxford OX7 2PU.

Christianity and Homosexuality

Sir, — May one whose name has been invoked several times in connection with this subject, express regret that 'homosexuality' has been regularly and confusingly used to denote a kind of behaviour? Vern L. Bullough (Letter, March 20) writes of 'Christian legislation against homosexuality', and of penitential 'hostile to homosexuality', etc; but there is no evidence of legislation against, or hostility to, the personal sexual condition known as 'homosexuality'. This sexual disorientation was not recognized in the past; legislators, theologians, and moralists were concerned simply with venerable practices between persons of the same sex. The Wolfenden report, in 1957, drew a clear distinction between 'homosexuality' as propensity and 'homosexuality' as behaviour, and it is desirable that this distinction be observed in the interests of accuracy and clarity, and to avoid giving offence. In the book to which your reviewer and correspondents have been kind enough to refer, I have been careful always to use the expression 'homosexuality' to denote the behaviour, and to distinguish it from the condition, it would be helpful if some sort of usage of this kind could be established in order to avoid confusion. Incidentally, I was not aware that I had agreed that 'medieval writers misinterpreted the Christian message', but perhaps I have not understood what Mr Bullough meant by this statement.

JOHN INGLETON.
Director, The Wallace Collection, Manchester Square, London W1M 6BN.

Place-Names

Sir, — In his kind appreciation of my *Place-Name Changes since 1900* (Reminders, March 13), Eric Korn wonders why I include the changes of Canmore/Kaupar and Kingstown/Dun Laoghaire but do not give Benares/Varean/Dublin/Bally Atha Cléir.

The straightforward answer is that both the 'latter place' and all widely known internationally, even if unofficially or incorrectly, by their traditional names, and that no governmental renaming has taken place except at a local level. Indeed, Dublin ('black pool') has not really been renamed at all, since Bally Atha Cléir ('the town at the hurdle ford') is simply an alternative name preferred by current

Irish speakers to commemorate the historic landing of the river Liffey by means of women warriors rather than preserving the equally ancient Celtic name for the river itself.

Canmore, on the other hand, was officially renamed in 1948, together with a number of other places in India, by authority of the Government of India, and Kingstown, commemorating a visit by George IV in 1821, reverted to its Irish name ('Fort of Laoghaire') exactly a century later.

Mr Korn may rest assured that Zimabwe, Kibbutz, Vanuatu, and other recent renamings and reversions will all appear in a second edition of the book planned for 1984.

AORIAN ROOM.
173 The Causeway, Petersfield, Hants GU31 4LN.

British Library

Sir, — Nicolas Barker's supportive piece on The American Trust for The British Library (January 9) noted properly the role of the then British Museum as early on a place of pilgrimage for USA readers, as in the case of W. H. Prescott, the historian, in 1850. Some thirty years before, his predecessor as an American man of letters, and subsequently WHP's good friend, Washington Irving, had repaid his own debts to BM in his *Sketch Book* (1819-1820), in 'The Art of Book-Making'. The designedly whimsical tone of 'Geoffrey Crayon' in this descriptive sketch ('The door yielded to my hand, with that facility with which the portals of enchanted castles yield to the adventurous Knight errant') only served to emphasize the genuineness of the writer's respect for this transatlantic centre for learning. Surely it also prepared the way for the host of his countrymen and readers who would follow.

ANOREW B. MYERS.
President, The Washington Irving Society, English Department, Fordham University, New York, NY 10458.

Stauffenberg

Sir, — In his zeal to see my novel, *The Very Rich Hours of Count von Stauffenberg*, converted into a movie, your reviewer (issue of February 6) says the book ends with the execution of Stauffenberg and his collaborators. If he had read carefully, he would have noticed that, in fact, Stauffenberg is executed on page 224, which may indeed be what he remembers on page 349 (although the Count could perhaps have fled that bit from Ernst Jünger; the dead have uncanny privileges, like book reviewers, although the dead are livelier in some instances and less coarse-grained). By quoting almost in its entirety the opening paragraph of my novel, your reviewer has attracted to that paragraph a good deal of praise, by the way, and I am obliged.

PAUL WEST.
University Park, Pa 16802.

'Water Over Stone'

Sir, — Without wishing to cloud Vicki Feaver's appreciative notice of the new book of poems by Frances Horowitz (March 20), I want to correct a couple of inaccuracies. *Water Over Stone* is not 'her first collection', but her third. In 1967 the St Albans Press, Aylesford, published her earliest poems, and in 1970 *The High Tower* appeared as *New Departures* No 6 — slimmer volumes, but collections for all that, and still available from the address below.

The first two words of the first line of Ms Feaver's quotation from 'Letter to be sent by air' should of course read 'my fingers' and not 'my fingers'; and the fourth line of this extract is in fact 'how you are torn out of me' and not 'town'.

MICHAEL HOROVITZ.
New Departures, Binley, Stroud, Glos GL6 7BU.

'Among this week's contributors' is on page 366.

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The practice of variety

By Graham Reynolds

DAVID BINDMAN

Hogarth

213pp. 166 black and white illustrations. 17 colour illustrations. Thames and Hudson. £5.95. 0 500 20182 X

The series in which this volume appears is so extensive and long-running that it comes as a surprise to find that a study of Hogarth is only now being added to it. Yet the lack of haste has been fruitful, since it gave time for the two major additions to Hogarth scholarship, Ronald Paulson's biography and Lawrence Gowing's exhibition, both in 1971, to be fully assimilated. David Bindman has made effective use of these authorities for his up-to-date digest of fact and comment, and he has provided his own balanced interpretation of the artist's career.

While he accords substantial importance to its anecdotal content, Bindman lays emphasis stress on the purely painterly excellence of Hogarth's art. It is true that in the past reservations were often felt about his artistic stature; reservations based on doubts about his technical skill. (Cenotaph, who saw the first great Hogarth retrospective at the British Institution in 1814, quoted with mordant scorn the opinions of Burke and Walpole that "Hogarth was no painter".) In fact, as Bindman emphasizes, his vibrant brushwork achieves an overall balance of delectable colour. Hogarth's own delight in his dexterity is shown by his leaving "The Shrimp Girl" and "The Wedding Dance" as sketches. Bindman attributes Hogarth's painterly merits to his masonic system, in which he memorized observed incidents and characters by reducing them to their significant lines. There is an interesting parallel between this linear approach and Turner's practice of sketching in an ugly shorthand which his remarkable visual memory translated into completed form. In neither case is the result linear or two-dimensional.

Hogarth also had an innate gift for organizing large groups into a coherent composition. Without this capacity he could not have made his pictures and prints, crowded as they are with figures and subjects, intelligible to his public. But to accept this quality is not to consign Hogarth to a formalist limbo. He may suggest in his writings that aesthetics can be reduced to the identification of a specific form; in "The Analysis of Beau-

ty" he associates grace with the serpentine line. But his work is dominated not by his theory but by his passion for life. The son of a schoolmaster, his observation was enriched by his reading and by the stage. He drew or painted subjects from Shakespeare, Milton, Samuel Butler and Dryden, but he found his main copy in his own observation and invention. He is a natural story-teller and reveals in filling his canvases with properties which comment on or elucidate the narrative. Deciphering his allusions has been a major preoccupation of writers on Hogarth since André Rieu published his commentary on *Marriage à la Mode* the year after the plates were issued. These interpretations are always absorbing to read, and emphasize Hogarth's achievement in enhancing the impact of his painting by his plethora of reference.

Hogarth was a true Londoner, and the vitality of his art springs from the vitality of London life, viewed from its heights to its depths. Bindman makes a seminal observation about the interpretive role the topography of London plays in the serial works, illustrating his thesis with a map identifying the chief sites. Seen in this light the contrast between City and West End gives additional significance to the action. The Hogarth begins her profession in Cheapside and ends in Grosvenor. The Rake reaches the crisis of his career at the corner of Piccadilly and St James's Street. The merchant's house in *Marriage à la Mode* looks over London Bridge, while Lord Squander builds his Palladian villa in the West End. East and west, high and low, meet in Covent Garden, the centre for theatres, taverns and brothels. This topographical counterpoint reaches its peak in the procession of the idle apprentice from Newgate to Tyburn gibbet, an inverted Pilgrim's Progress through thronged streets from the centre to the outskirts of London.

Hogarth supported the major philanthropic ventures of his day in many practical ways: by the gift of pictures, of money, and by serving on the governing bodies of charities. Bindman is inclined to question whether a concern for benevolence is much apparent in his works. In a sense, however, the whole of his satire is a commentary on the proposition that man has a natural principle of benevolence.

The formulation of this doctrine for Hogarth's age was made by Bishop Butler, an associate of Hogarth and an influential divine whom the artist knew and portrayed. The modern moral subjects certainly exemplify another of Butler's principles, that nothing can be more contrary to nature than vice.

Spareness a speciality

By Antonia Phillips

HELEN FRANKENTHALER

Helen Frankenthaler Prints 1961-1979

144pp. New York: Icon Editions/Harper and Row. 0 06 434020 1

Robert Rauschenberg once remarked that the second half of the twentieth century was so full of art that it was like a rock, but since 1960 there has been a resurgence in the art of print-making. This is especially true of the United States, where Tanya Grossman's Universal Limited Art Editions and the Gemini Workshops have encouraged, even catalysed, American painters to try their hand with prints. As a result of this renewed interest in the print both of artists and dealers, considerable technological advances have been achieved, particularly in lithography and relief printing. The artists who have made prints under the auspices of Mrs Grossman's famous Long Island workshop include Larry Rivers, Jasper Johns, Rauschenberg, Motherwell and Sam Francis.

Helen Frankenthaler (born 1928) came to the notice of the New York art world in the early 1950s, with an oil painting entitled "Mountain and Sea". This was a large Abstract Expressionist work, exploiting the distinctive staining technique which Frankenthaler "invented".

I was then starting to use a concoction of housepaint, enamel, turpentine and/or kerosene and (the oil paints) in varying amounts, mixed and spilled from empty coffee cans, both with and without the aid of wide brushes, on unstretched cotton duck.

The canvas, which was laid flat on the floor as she worked on it, was also upturned, so that the paint soaked through.

Frankenthaler came to Abstract Expressionism via the influence of Miró, O'Keefe and de Kooning, but it was Jackson Pollock who made the greatest impression on her. "You could become a de Kooning disciple or an abstractist or mirror, but you could depart from Pollock." There is some question whether she has succeeded in "departing", in working her way out of so enormous a shadow. Her solution seems to have been, in part, to achieve emotional intensity, in favour of something more meditative. From Pollock, Frankenthaler took several elements: large scale, and emphasis on automaticity, on gesture (not merely of the wrist and elbow), on spontaneity and accident.

I'd rather risk an ugly surprise than rely on things I know I can do. The whole business of spotting, the small area of colour in a big canvas; how edges meet; how accidents are controlled; all this fascinated me, though it is often where I am most filled and most accessible by my own talent.

When describing the compelling atmosphere of riotous life in the tavern scene in *The Rake's Progress*, the author cautions us not to suppose that Hogarth is really encouraging us to share the fun. But I think this places an undue restriction on the ambiguity of reference in Hogarth's irony.

He surely expects us to enjoy all the bawdry and expression of character, and at the same time to be aware of the sordid reality. Such ambivalence would be fully consistent with the eighteenth century's genius for comic observation. Fielding makes Sophia a credible and durable heroine, but invites us to relish the glimpse of her shiny posterior when she suffers an embarrassing and humiliating fall. Hogarth delighted in foils, actual or imminent. The level pretensions in the collapse of the stage bearing Cibber's *The Fall of Bojaset* just as he duels when the Rev Peter Wilman overbalances as he views a lucrative living. The complexity of Hogarth's satire is shown by his parodying his own "Paul before Felix", and by his mockery of public exhibitions in the Sign-Painters Exhibition.

It is also questionable whether it is strictly true that Hogarth "kept a certain distance" from the scheme of decoration for Vauxhall Gardens. He must be the originator mentioned in a contemporary statement that "the hint of this rational and elegant entertainment was given by a Gentleman, whose Paintings exhibit the most useful lessons of Morality, blended with the happiest strokes of humour" and he seems to have influenced the whole programme, with its emphasis on Shakespeare and the modern stage, besides contributing his own "Henry and Anne Boleyn" and "The Fairies dancing on the Green at Midnight" to the decorations.

Bindman gives welcome recognition to the merits of Hogarth's ventures into history painting, such as "Moses brought to Pharaoh's Daughter" for the Foundling Hospital and the altar-piece for St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol. Since he matured under the aegis of his father-in-law, Thornehill it would have been surprising if he had not imbibed some instinct for the Grand Design, nor aspired to modernize it with his own individual note. Yet these efforts were so alien to the accepted view of his capabilities that Reynolds could assert "the very imprudently or rather presumptuously, attempted the great historical style, for which his previous habits had by no means prepared him: he was indeed so entirely unacquainted with the principles of this style that he was not even aware that any artificial preparation was at all necessary". In his present assessment the author exempts the even

more harshly criticized "Sigismunda" from such sweeping condemnation.

When he set up his coach, Hogarth had decorated with the device of Variety. In one sense this was a reference to the chief source of pleasure in Nature, the serpentine line which "leads the eye's whimsy kind of cheer". But he is also pointing to the many types of painting which he practised. Alongside the history painting which attracted the scorn of his critics went portrait painting, conversation pictures and some of the earliest paintings from Shakespearean subjects. He invented the modern moral subject, and Bindman discerns in the background of "The Polling" a link with the lumbering landscape of Richard Wilson. It was his intention to establish an English school of painting untroubled by unwelcome foreign influences. He tried to achieve this in a number of ways: through his running of the St Martin's Academy, by writing on theory, by precept and controversy, and chiefly through his own practice in all the departments of painting. If he had lived to witness the foundation of the Royal Academy and its contribution to the formation of the English school he might have added yet more to his personal satire to his final print "The Bathos". He would have echoed Blake's resentment that "while Sir Joshua was telling in Riches, Barry was Poor & Unemployed except by his own Energy". Constable said that Hogarth left so school and indeed the succession mark skin to his temperament are to be found among the neo-conformists whose relations with the Academy, and with patrons, were always uneasy, such as Blair and Constable himself.

It was no idle conceit which led Hogarth to rest his self-portrait on the words of Shakespeare. Hazlitt saw in him a comic author second only to Shakespeare, and he held the mirror up to Nature with such fidelity that we can find a match chest full of the caricatures of the eighteenth century, their visual aspect and the character of the people who lived them. Hogarth does not ignore the dark aspects of urban life, the Harlot, the Rake, Lord Squanderer and idle all come to visit, some to tragic ends. It was a Shakespearean trait in him which enables him to combine these perceptions of the depths with a rich appreciation of the comic and absurd. His art is so central to English life and the national temperament that it can never lose its relevance. As a clear and well-conceived introduction to Hogarth's exuberant and complex art this concise study is to be warmly welcomed.

The candour of her last remark points to difficulties faced, surely, by many second-generation Abstract Expressionists, as well as to the need for confidence in the results of this "East and Beyond" of colour, (What red lines can do, "Fischer Vane", *Lo's IV*). For her month's psychotherapist towards London, abstracted from memory or from nature, and one is struck by her feeling for the simplicity of her compositions. In 1973 Tatyana Grossman persuaded Frankenthaler to try a woodcut, and the results of this "East and Beyond" of colour, (What red lines can do, "Fischer Vane", *Lo's IV*). For her month's psychotherapist towards London, abstracted from memory or from nature, and one is struck by her feeling for the simplicity of her compositions. In 1973 Tatyana Grossman persuaded Frankenthaler to try a woodcut, and the results of this "East and Beyond" of colour, (What red lines can do, "Fischer Vane", *Lo's IV*). For her month's psychotherapist towards London, abstracted from memory or from nature, and one is struck by her feeling for the simplicity of her compositions.

The book, whose publication coincides with a touring exhibition in the United States, is a *catalogue raisonné* of the artist's work, with about forty pages of text (interspersed with photographs of the artist at work), a chronology of her career and a "prodigious bibliography". Each print, together with some related photographs and paintings, is illustrated in black-and-white. Colour is reserved for Frankenthaler's work, so that it is regrettable that there are only sixteen colour plates, and the vagaries of colour reproduction, let alone the reduction in scale, make it difficult to assess the quality of these plates.

In her early prints (lithographs, silk-screen, aquatints, etc.), she employs the device, present in the paintings, of an open, soft, central square, but this

ART

Translations of the traumatic

By S.S. Praver

FRANK WHITFORD

Egon Schiele

212pp. 151 black and white illustrations. 20 colour illustrations. Thames and Hudson. £5.95. 0 500 20183 8

How often Schiele has been the forgotten man of art-history! Werner Haftmann's widely read and widely translated *Painting in the Twentieth Century*, which rehabilitated what Hitler had tried to suppress as "degenerate art", found no room even for Schiele's name. The Kronhaus's two-volume documentation of Erotic Art made a wider public acquainted with the Japanese *shunga*, with Rops, with Paschi—but Schiele's once so notorious erotic paintings and drawings remained unrepresented and unmentioned. Patrick Bade's *Femme Fatale* does not even mention Schiele's pubescent Lolitas or his other unmanly and original contributions to the iconography of dangerous allure. The standard work on ornamental posters of the Vienna Secession finds room for everyone but Schiele, whose beautiful poster for the forty-ninth exhibition (1918) remains unproduced. The most extensive exhibition of portrait-painting ever assembled—*Bilder von Menschen*, Berlin 1980—included all the Expressionist portraitists except, once again, Egon Schiele.

And so it goes; but not for much longer. After the Guggenheim retrospective of Klimt and Schiele in the mid-1960s, and the Royal Academy's Vienna Secession show at the beginning of the 1970s, general interest in Schiele has steadily grown—it has even resulted in a number of television films which have brought this artist's often disturbing and uncomfortable work into thousands of homes. At the same time documentary and interpretive volumes by Christian Nebelung, Otto Kalir, Rudolf Leopold and Erwin Mitsch in Austria, Alessandra Comelli in America, as well as Peter Vergo and Simon Wilson in this country, help to ensure that Schiele will never be overlooked again. Frank Whitford's new book, in the popular World of Art Library series, may be welcomed as another step in the same direction.

The texture and structure of Whitford's book are equally satisfactory. He writes in an attractively plain, jargon-free manner and has found a simple and thoroughly sensible way of ordering his abundant material. The book begins with an overview of the cultural and social ambience of the Austria in which Schiele spent the twenty-eight years of his tragically short life; it continues with ten chronologically arranged chapters that show us to follow the development of his art in the context of this life; and it ends with a brief glance at his posthumous reputation. Within this framework, Whitford discusses a number of important themes and motifs as well as individual works of art, and documents his discussion with 151 well-chosen illustrations. Not enough of the illustrations are in colour, alas—the important paintings of Schiele's final period, 1917-1918, seem sadly diminished by their monochrome reproduction; but there are good colour reproductions of the earlier work (that of the decorative portrait of Friederike Beer, painted in 1914; is especially successful). Schiele was in any case more of a graphic artist than a painter and his work depends less on colour than that of his teacher, Klimt, whose portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer, reproduced on p.22, is only the dimmest shadow of itself in black-and-white form. Responsible publishers would do well to remember, however, a letter to Richard Lanyon which Whitford (understandably) fears to quote. In this letter dated March 1, 1917, Schiele deprecated monochrome reproduction of his latest works, adding that he was being told "all art ideas 'dass die Reproduktion verlor ist, wenn man die Farben nicht sieht'—[his] reproduction is a loss of colour, and the colours which are so important a part of the artist's composition."

The story Whitford has chosen to tell is made particularly vivid by his imaginative juxtapositions of Schiele's work with the work of other artists: with that of Klimt, for instance, or Kokoschka, or Gerstl, or Munch, or Van Gogh. Most readers cannot show. Even here, however, one must supplement these juxtapositions

given us. Take the magnificent "Self-Portrait with Raised Right Hand" which Die Aktion reproduced as its frontpiece in a special Schiele issue in September 1915. The Aktion version, reproduced on p.176, seems to be based on a black chalk drawing that figures on p.9 of *Egon Schiele: Schriften und Zeichnungen* issued as a limited edition by the Allerheiligen-Verlag in 1968. As the limit of the artist's own book, however, Whitford has chosen another version, in pencil and water-colour, which adds an extra dimension, a plastic rounding, that seems lacking in the Aktion frontpiece. Is the chalk version a tracing of the pencil and water-colour one? And what are the colours that Schiele chose? Neither Whitford's text nor his monochrome reproduction answers these questions.

Other small criticisms obtrude themselves. Whitford's translations of German texts, for instance, though usually accurate and idiomatic, do not always reproduce quite the right nuance of meaning. Thus he quotes the artist's assurance to his future wife: "I am really not at all like an 'apache'—that is simply a temporary pose caused by arrogance." It would be remarkable indeed to find Schiele, who was not noted for excessive humility, accusing himself of arrogance—the word he in fact uses is "Übermut", which would be better rendered as "high spirits". "Krauthappel"—quoted as an Austrian locution on p.20—is new to me; does it really mean "cabbage head", as Whitford claims? And unaccountably the author fails to help those of his readers who have no German by explaining the pun inherent in Schiele's "squinting" self-portrait: a pun, of course, on the painter's name which has reminded so many hostile critics of the verb "schließen", to squint.

None of this, however, seriously impairs the usefulness of the many analyses this new book contains. Here is an altogether typical passage—an excerpt from Whitford's commentary on Schiele's portraits of Eduard Kosmak, Karl Rössler and Karl Zakovsek:

Schiele seems to have been looking carefully at Munch's work. The curious billowing shape which encloses Rössler is Schiele's portrait of him is a transformation of the wall-like shadow which appears to emerge from Munch's adolescent like a menagerie *Doppelgänger*. But unlike Kosmak, Rössler seems assured and confident. Eyes closed, he seems to be communicating with someone on a higher plane.

The portrait of Karl Zakovsek, a painter and one of the *Neuköllner*, is one of Schiele's most stylized works to date. So thin that his hands are little more than skeletal, and so comported that his limbs seem fractured and dislocated, from red-rimmed eyes he directs a gaze at us that is both weary and melancholy. Like Kosmak, Zakovsek is clearly abnormal. Both are introspective, creatures of their mind to such an extent that their bodies seem like inconvenient appendages, the prisons within which their true selves are trapped.

In the piece of Klimt's rich, mosaic-like areas of decoration, Schiele has set a void, which threatens and occasionally overpowers the figure it envelops. This void, present in all these portraits along with a growing sense of the bareness of a kind of prison, emphasizes the artist's isolation and alienation from society.

That illustrates very well the futility and economy with which the author combines evocative description—a description that happily eschews technical terms likely to be unfamiliar to non-specialists—with historical placing and formal analysis. As portraits to which the passage refers, as well as some of the "rich mosaic-like" areas of decoration, Klimt, are decoration characteristic of Schiele, are reproduced in the book; this enables each reader to see how the artist's eye and skill of the author's trained eye and skill of the artist's composition.

Accepting the inevitable limitations of size and colour which the series imposes on the contributors, Whitford helps the reader by describing what he cannot show. Even here, however, one must supplement these juxtapositions

with parallels of their own: the nude self-portraits with others in a line that runs from Dürer to Victor Emil Janssen; the portraits of the dead Klimt and the dying Edith with Hodier's moving drawings and paintings of Valentine Ood-Darcel on her death-bed; the prison portraits (especially that reproduced on p.181) with the work of Francis Bacon. Whitford also allows us to watch Schiele's variations of such traditional motifs as the Dance of Death, Death and the Maiden, and the Spectral Double or *Doppelgänger*. But as this last example suggests, the parallels continue beyond the bounds of the graphic arts; Whitford shows himself capable, where necessary, of making the appropriate literary con-



Egon Schiele's self-portrait (1916) from the book reviewed here.

nections as well as connections with Vienna psychoanalysis. Here too the reader will find many additional lines of development without invalidating those which Whitford has drawn for him.

Nor is it only the parallels and likenesses that are made to count. Nothing could better refute the charge of pornography which has so often been levelled at Schiele than the contrast Whitford draws between the way he portrays sexual act and sexual drive, and the portrayal of these same acts and desires in the graphic work of Félicien Rops. In the same way he teaches us to distinguish what links Schiele's work with that of the German Expressionist and what differentiates it, and he shows up important differences between Schiele's "saturated geometry". His attempts to reconcile these-dimensional motifs with the two-dimensional picture-plane, and similar attempts by Cubist painters, more fascinating of all is Whitford's use of photo-

graphs. The confrontation of Schiele's portrait of Friederike Beer, for instance, with a photo of the same subject taken in the same year (1914), brings home to us with unwelcome force the extent to which Schiele's portraits of his sisters are self-portraits—even when the portrait is as decorative and painterly, as far removed from expressive distortion, as this one.

There are other, no less interesting, confrontations of the same kind: the hand-movements captured in the photograph of Mos and Erwin Osen, for instance, remind us that exaggerated gesture was part of a period style, the style of cabaret performers no less than that of actors in silent films. One's only regret is that author and publishers did not find room for the juxtaposition of a photograph of Adele Harms, taken by Schiele himself, and the water-colour the artist then based upon it. But one can only be grateful that Whitford found himself able to include so many of Schiele's self-portraits, with their unique combination of a narcissistic dandyism and ruthless exposure of weakness and pain, their nervous lines, and their unerring sense of pictorial composition. The series runs from a powerful charcoal sketch of 1906 to the nude self-portrait of 1909 which marked a turning-point in Schiele's art, and thence to the great "Crouching Couple" (or "The Family") of 1918, which seems to mark another transition—a transition quickly stopped when Schiele's life, like that of his master Klimt and his wife Edith before him, was cut short by the influenza epidemic which swept Europe just after the end of the First World War.

Some sides of Schiele's art inevitably remain undiscussed. There is, for instance, no mention of his characteristic variations on the common "Thresles" syndrome—ambiguous images that include a self-portrait in which the painted hand imposes the simulacrum of a female pseudomorph onto the subject's male genitalia; nor is there any discussion of his no less characteristic versions of what one might term the Backset syndrome—the foreshortened image of the whole human life-cycle, of man born astride a grave, which appears in such works as "The Dead Mother". And while admiring such subtle and convincing eschews as Whitford's commentary on Schiele's double portrait of Heinrich and Otto Benesch (one of the most complex presentations of the father-son relationship in the whole of modern art), one cannot help but agree with his interpretation of the development he chronicles to abide, for one, cannot see Schiele as stylistically imprisoned, "trapped... while everything outside is undergoing a great transformation", as Whitford's final conclusion claims. The book has shown, after all, what enormous progress his art had made in a very short time, and what new transformation his comparatively happy final year had promised.

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William Blake, *Christ the Redeemer*, 1804. The Paul Mellon Centre, New York.

A community and its commission

By Bruce Boucher

JONEPH CONNORS:

Borromini and the Roman Oratory: Style and Society
375pp. MIT Press. £27.90.
0 262 03071 3

Prospective readers of *Borromini and the Roman Oratory* may open the book with more than a little scepticism. The dust-jacket carries tributes from Howard Hibbard and David Coffin to the effect that it "is the single most important contribution to the study of Borromini that has ever been made" and "a magnificent work of scholarship in its breadth of approach and thoroughness of details". This is heady stuff, even by the encomiastic standards of such writing, but happily it is true. Joseph Connors has approached Borromini's work for the Oratorians in a brilliant and somewhat unorthodox way: he has studied the interaction of patronage and urban pressures, of economics and function, of imagery and perception in order to present a densely textured picture of the Casa dei Filippini in Rome. His examination not only reveals how Borromini's designs for the complex evolved, but also shows how autonomous forces, in and around the Casa, helped to create the buildings as we experience them today.

At first glance, the Casa dei Filippini might seem a less promising subject for a monograph than other works by Borromini, such as San Carlino or Sant'Ivo or even the Propaganda Fide. Borromini was employed by the Oratorians at an early stage in his career and had to reconcile his ideas with a pre-existing model and a set of patrons who often did not appreciate what he was trying to do. Beyond that, his work there lacks the obvious brilliance of San Carlo or the maturity of the Propaganda Fide. Yet, as Professor Connors maintains, the Roman Oratory occupies a crucial place within Borromini's career and puts much of the architect's later work into a proper perspective.

Borromini was employed by the Oratorians between 1637 and his dismissal in 1652, a period in which the architect's ideas were in a constant process of development. The Casa gave him the chance to impose his concepts on a large complex and to work for patrons who were willing to pay for a high standard of building, however much they protested to the contrary. In addition, his years with the Oratorians led Borromini into a close collaboration with Virgilio Spada, a priest who later brought the architect to the attention of Pope Innocent X and opened to him the possibilities of papal patronage.

Professor Connors places Borromini's work for the followers of St Philip Neri within the larger context of the history of the site on which their buildings were constructed. In doing so, he demonstrates more clearly than had previously been appreciated the extent to which Borromini was constrained by the building patterns adopted by the Oratorians earlier in the century. St Philip and his followers had been given the small church of Santa Maria in Vallicella in 1575. Their first priority had been the rebuilding of the old

church, around which they settled in makeshift quarters. After construction had begun, the plan of the church was twice enlarged, and by the end of the century, it had grown into a structure rivaling the Gesù. Similarly, imprudent changes affected construction of the Casa and its oratory. These buildings were originally planned for the area to the east of the church until the threatened purchase of land to the west by the Brambilles forced the Oratorians to shift their site in that direction.

Such was the situation in 1621. As Connors observes, the Oratorians were committed to a site and a scale of building far removed from the humble intention of the first generation of Filippini; they had also acquired the habit of making changes to their projects after they were under way. Such changes reflected the idiosyncratic nature of the Oratory as well as a determined attempt on the part of the fathers to find a *via media* between the princely dwellings of the Jesuits and Theatines and the austerity of the monastic orders. These same impulses and improvisations were to recur again and again in Borromini's dealings with the fathers and left their stamp upon the emerging group of buildings.

One of the most important contributions of *Borromini and the Roman Oratory* is to correct the history of the project as told by Borromini and Virgilio Spada. The general tenor of their accounts is that Borromini won a competition to design the Oratory after other architects had demonstrated their incompetence. The story told by the documents and drawings points in another direction, for there was no competition and Borromini was employed as the executor of another man's project. By drawing attention to this, Connors places Borromini's role in a clearer perspective and also reassesses the reputation of the architect he supplanted, Paolo Maruscelli. This young and hitherto neglected architect produced a comprehensive project for the oratory, audience chambers, refectory and living quarters in 1627, ten years before the arrival of Borromini. Maruscelli had drawn upon the help of the aristocratic Spada to create a design of novelty and intelligence.

His project also goes a long way towards explaining the kind of building the Oratorians wanted for themselves. Two influences in particular guided Maruscelli and Spada in formulating their ideas: Palladio's woodcut of the *Convento della Carità* in Venice and Sola's Palazzo della famiglia Borghese in Rome. The reasons behind this eclecticism are simple but compelling. The Carlini stood apart from contemporary Roman building types, thus distinguishing the Oratorians from the Jesuits and Theatines, a distinction which the fathers were at some pains to establish in their way of life. The palace of the Borghese is an even more interesting choice of model as it was institutional, being neither aristocratic nor even monastic in concept. It was precisely this kind of halfway house which suited the Oratorians and was eventually embodied in Borromini's work for them.

Just how Borromini warped the role of Maruscelli as architect to the fathers remains a mystery, but Connors shows that

it was not, as Borromini later maintained, via a competition. The Oratorians had rarely used competitions, preferring a procedure called a *consulta*. This took the form of a consultation whereby an architect was set to solve a problem with the benefit of other architects' ideas for reference. Such a method agreed with the placement approach in building that the Filippini had adopted, and there is no doubt that the fair which Borromini brought to the solution of the site and elevation of the oratory—the focal point of the congregation's activities—renewed mind to their attention. There is no doubt, either, that Borromini's arrival was aided by Spada, always on the lookout for new talent. The irony of his appointment, however, was that Borromini did not have a free hand to introduce his own ideas; he was designated by the fathers as an adaptor of Maruscelli's project, not as an innovator.

In the event, Borromini and Spada were able to bend the older project to their will—"putting a well tailored suit on an ungainly body" was the architect's less than charitable explanation of the process. It is Spada who emerges from Connors's account as the crucial figure in mediating between Borromini and a confused, often restive body of priests and laymen. Together, the two men formed a strong team, with the financial capabilities of the priest matching the effectiveness of the architect. Above all, it was Spada's ability to understand architecture and his fellow Oratorians that enabled Borromini's ideas to become a reality. *Borromini and the Roman Oratory* provides a fascinating account of the financial mechanisms behind the Oratorian patronage and of the way in which Borromini and Spada pushed and pulled the Filippini into a project they did not always understand. Often Spada himself would resolve a deadlock between the fathers and their architect by contributing a modest sum of money to underwrite some change in plan. This in turn would produce a chain reaction, leading to more radical solutions elsewhere.

Connors gives us several informative pages about the high cost of Borromini's work for the Oratory and the expensive nature of the total project. By his reckoning, its cost may have been higher than for Sixtus V's Lateran palace or Maderno's nave and facade for St Peter's. Such comparisons can only be a rough guide, but they are supported by the high standards of design set by Borromini. One telling comparison comes in the cost of marble door-frames, those designed by Maruscelli averaged seventy-six scudi while one of Borromini's cost 700 scudi for the workshop alone.

Patronage and economics are only a part of *Borromini and the Roman Oratory*. It also contains much new information on Borromini's architecture and on the evolution of his ideas. The account of the Oratory's facade, one of the architect's most notable achievements, is especially valuable. As early as 1621, the congregation entrusted the idea of building an ecclesiastical facade for their proposed oratory, and when Maruscelli subsequently established its location to the west of the church, the necessity for some sort of

fugate as a counterweight to the monumental Santa Maria in Vallicella would have seemed inescapable. There were, however, problems with the location, chiefly to do with the alignment of the oratory with a courtyard behind and the articulation of its street facade. Borromini has generally been given credit for solving this nest of problems, but an examination of several drawings connected with the first stages of the oratory tends to convince me that his hand was not as decisive as he would have us believe. He tentatively identifies it as the work of an older architect, Giovanni Rinaldi, whose ideas were then incorporated into a second project by Borromini. It was Borromini's second, now lost, project that won the favour of the Oratorians and led to his appointment as sole architect in July 1637.

With the interior of the oratory, Borromini was bound by the customary design of such buildings as they had evolved during the sixteenth century. His innovations, as Connors notes, lie more in the realm of the psychology of appearances. The exterior gave more scope to his imagination and, again, was not a case of an immediate act of genius but a series of steps taken in response to changing circumstances. According to his reading of Borromini's first project of 1637, the facade was not to be curved but indented, although the drawing is so poorly reproduced that one must take Connors's analysis on trust. It subsequently grew from a five to a seven-bay facade when the Oratorians decided to move the library to the floor above the oratory, one year after the facade had been begun. Presumably unperturbed, Borromini increased the height while expanding the facade's width. Change was particularly registered in the ornamentation, "the artist's brushstroke" in the author's felicitous phrase. Borromini lavished his genius on this so that the inferior material of the facade, brickwork, was turned to advantage. The facade of the oratory became more than curved; its inflection conveyed a suppleness reminiscent of a sculptor's model. In this context it is worth noting, as Connors does note, that Borromini seems to have made models of his buildings in wax; the analogy

with sculpture, particularly with Borromini's hero Michelangelo, is telling one. Connors's discussion of the facade is one of the highpoints of an extremely rewarding book. He has a way of writing that does justice to the intricacies of Borromini's works. It is curious, though, that his account of the Casa rarely shows the same degree of enthusiasm as the few pages on the facade. He often fails to convey a vivid sense of individual rooms like the sala di *ricreazione* with its splendid fireplace. This is a small defect and may be attributable to the vast amount of ground which the author had to cover in his account of the buildings of the Oratorians.

The decision to write an extended account of the Roman Oratory is amply justified by the results, but there often seems to be too much foreground and not enough background for the subject. Borromini's other buildings are mentioned all too fleetingly, and the text is extremely condensed, with a disproportionate amount of material being put into the catalogue. The result is that the flow of the narrative is constantly interrupted by the need to turn to the notes and catalogue entries. Moreover, the closeness with which the author has studied the seventeenth-century history of the Vallicella site means that the proposed antithesis between the first and second generations of the Oratorians is not developed, and the presence of the late sixteenth-century church is inadequately treated. A lengthier text with bolder catalogue notes would have spared the reader some pains, and might have enabled the publisher to allow more space for larger and better illustrations of the drawings. In many cases Borromini's own faint drawings have vanished from the page, which is disturbing since many of Connors's arguments are predicated upon a close analysis of the graphic evidence.

But the merits of *Borromini and the Roman Oratory* shine through in spite of the stingy illustrations. With this study, Professor Connors has vaulted into the forefront of authorities on Roman baroque architecture. One awaits impatiently further instalments of his studies in the architecture of Borromini.

A major minor

By Benedict Read

ALBERT BOIME:
Thomas Couture and the Eclectic Vision
612pp. Yale University Press. £35.
0 300 02158 5

Those for whom Thomas Couture is the artist of a single picture, "The Remains of the Decadence", might well ask whether he or it requires lengthy examination, however occasionally fabulous that painting may have appeared at the time it was first shown in 1847. Albert Boime clearly thinks there is more to Couture than this, and he sets out to give him a specific place in art-history, relating his life and work to the political and cultural realities of his time, and tracing his influence via his pupils on later art. The book is in three parts. The first part seeks to define the state of French society during the first half of the nineteenth century, a period which saw the triumph of the bourgeoisie and the political and cultural ideal of the "juste milieu". Part Two, which is the longest, then traces the development of Couture's painting in response to these social and political circumstances. Part Three, finally, seeks to define the state of French society during the second half of the century, and to explain by describing in detail those who passed through his studio, and who may thus have transmitted his theory of painting.

The first and third sections of Professor Boime's study are the least successful; not because of the mass of detail and observations that they contain but because of the way Boime applies what he has learned. This is particularly true of the 180 pages in which Couture is presented as, in effect, the father of modern art—an astonishing conclusion to come to. Of course he had many pupils, and among these were Manet and Pissarro de Chavannes, through whom Boime manages to set up a

while items of tenuous connection, which ultimately associates such names as Braque and Jackson Pollock with that of Couture.

The central section of the book is more impressive. Here, Boime sets out to examine the quite substantial body of work which Couture produced. He has tracked down many of the paintings and sketches all that he can out of each picture, investigating its composition, palette, and ostensible meaning, personal meaning for the artist, symbolically meaning, artistic sources, relationship to the times, and so on. He makes excellent use of his sources and his own knowledge of the work, and the pertinence of Boime's observations make this part of the book both stimulating and worthwhile.

The focus of nineteenth-century art history and the study of the social and cultural studies has recently been changing away from the great names like Delacroix or such schools as the Impressionists, and towards less important figures. Professor Boime has now put Couture in his place, and reminded us that if we are properly to comprehend the art of this period we must also interpret its lesser light.

An important new reference work in the field of modern art is the *Catalogue of the Tate Gallery's Collection of Modern Art*, other than works by British Artists, compiled by Ronald Alley (799pp). Tate Gallery in association with Sotheby Parke Benet. £45. 0 35667 102 9). The book is a companion volume to the Tate's Modern British catalogue, but unlike the earlier work, it illustrates every item with a small black-and-white photograph. Each entry is preceded, from Janet Adler to Ignazio Zucconi, is given a 250-word biographical note, and each work in the collection is described in full, with details of provenance, exhibition and literature, as well as broader discussion of such questions as subject, dating and circumstances of composition.

Cross purposes

By Nicholas Penny

CHARLES JENCKS (Editor)
Post-Modern Classicism
The New Synthesis
144pp. Architectural Design with Academy Editions. £7.50 (US\$670 730 9)

This book, which is published by the glossy magazine *Architectural Design* (and looks like it), is an anthology of photographs and drawings of buildings recently erected or projected, with a few words added by the architects concerned and an introduction and running commentary by Charles Jencks, impresario of this new and absurdly entitled "ism". Is there really a "convergence" of styles "within Post-Modernism" and can this really constitute a movement when the architects themselves seem to share no sense of common purpose? Such questions do not detain Jencks. He even suggests that a "neo-Renaissance" may be on the way. Perhaps his idea of the Renaissance is as odd as his notion of Classicism, which seems to mean anything pre-modern and anti-graphic that contemporary architects evoke or misquote: "Cape Cod Vernacular", Versailles, the Brighton Pavilion, Boullée, Fischer von Erlach, San Michelato di Mantova.

From a new Classicism one has a right to expect a system of ideal proportions, certainly lucidity and harmony of plan and elevation, but there is less evidence of this in the buildings that are the book's subject than there was when the Modern Movement was in full swing. As for monumentality, which one would also expect, it is certainly attempted at Les Arcades du Lac, the glum pre-cast concrete new town by Ricardo Bofill and Taller de Arquitectura which includes some painfully ungainly cylinders and triangles. It may also be attempted by James Stirling at Rice, Berlin and München, which are, however, inadequately illustrated. In

his drawing of the Chemistry Library at Monheim, incidentally, Stirling has introduced a penicillin. This should put his soundproofing to a severe test and will also tear up the lawns and foul the skylights.

There is no evidence here of any serious desire to revive the solemnity or the grandeur of the ancient stone architecture of Greece and Rome. But then, to take Classicism "straight" would be "too easy, or boring, or expensive, or conformist". It would certainly involve self-discipline and a genuine sense of tradition which would be extraordinary today. The style of an architect is now conceived of as something like a trade-mark. In such circumstances there will be no common style, certainly no submission to ancient authorities. Competitive idiosyncrasy is the chief impression one receives from this anthology. But work of interest is certainly included. Jeremy Dixon's jazzy variation on the London terrace-house of 1900 looks successful; Rhodes House, Los Angeles by Moore, Ruble and Yudell looks elegant; and Charles Moore's Piazza d'Italia in New Orleans, with its parody of the orders in neon and stainless steel (and the school-boy humour found in the Italian villa garden of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries).

Jencks implies that the "eclecticism" of Modernism and the "snobism" of Classicism have been transcended, and claims that "Mass-culture has opened classicism to the masses as well as the classes". But it seems that appreciating architecture is still hard work. Looking at Shin Toki's Samsa building you must ask yourself "Is this a rusticated base turned on its side and curved? Is it the inside curve of the Villa Giulia turned to the outside street? Is it a face house embracing the street or a Fascist headquarters of the thirties?"; and in order to recognize that Robert Venturi's Chestnut Hill House revives the Queen Anne Revival you must imagine that half of it has sunk below ground.

Right building

By Stefan Muthesius

PETER DAVEY:
Arts and Crafts Architecture
The Search for Earthly Paradise
224pp. Architectural Press. £12.95.
0 35139 049 8

"I started to write this book, because I needed it myself," Peter Davey tells us, and it is true, as he claims, that there has been no comprehensive study to date of the architecture of the Arts and Crafts Movement, even if many of the names and buildings associated with it—Weir, Voysey, Lutyens—are exceedingly well known. In his lively book Davey relies much on recent research. His first and most striking feature is the number of pictures (110 in all—very generous of the price—of less-known buildings by the great masters of the movement; as well as the refreshingly new views it provides of their better-known work). As a handbook *Arts and Crafts Architecture* is relatively full; it includes short accounts of minor or medium-sized practitioners, such as Bidlake of Birmingham, or Walter Cave, and it makes use of some of the more obscure literature of the period, though the most voluminous contemporary source, *The Builder*, has not been sufficiently explored.

The division of the book is primarily chronological, and by architects. The chapters devoted to the "Country" and to the City respectively are further collections of the careers of individual architects, and as the author himself admits, the Arts and Crafts Movement contributed little to public urban architecture. But, if it is the theory behind Arts and Crafts architecture which needs further investigation, what exactly is one to say of Webb and Lethaby's "art of building"? Perhaps "art" is too strong a word and the explanation lies entirely in architectural practice. In the way Arts and Crafts architects designed, and especially the way they supervised, their buildings, Davey does provide a good detail here, in the case of Webb, Prior, Baines and Lethaby, but one would have liked more, especially in a book written by an architect. In a fascinating aside he makes clear that Lethaby's

roof at Brockhampton church, which combines concrete inlaid with thatch outside, is not just a quirk but an excellent solution from the point of view of insulation.

Davey tells us of the outset that his book "has a heavy bias", and he goes on to say that an agreement as to the aims of Arts and Crafts architecture will ever be possible. Yet the words "good building" or even "right building" recur again and again in his book, which is to use a value judgement to characterize a style. A builder would probably say that "good" building is simply a matter of finance, and perhaps of skilled craftsmanship, and that what the Arts and Crafts architect shared is simply their liking for rough surfaces and strong surface contrasts. Davey also claims "Individuality" repeatedly as a principle of the Movement, although to general it believed in restricting variety, and was opposed to the late Victorian taste for direct or mixed imitations of completed historical models. Most Arts and Crafts architects had no scruples about joining the rapidly emerging neo-academic Classicism movement, or the even swifter neo-Georgian, and the present revival of Lutyens is based on the break he represents away from Arts and Crafts reticence towards a greater stylistic variety.

According to Davey, Arts and Crafts architecture was dead by the time of the First World War. This may be true in the case of what has recently been called the "Dream House"—the small but select country residence designed for members of the upper middle class but surely, to speak in more general building terms, once our eyes have been drawn to the attractions of rubble surfaces, we will ever again be likely, or able, to disregard them.

Selected Paintings at the Norton-Shiro Museum (144pp. Philip Wilson. £7.95. 0 35667 104 1) is introduced by Frank Hermann and has over 300 colour plates. The Museum is in Pasadena, California. It contains the collection of one man. It contains many pre-Renaissance and Renaissance Italian paintings, large sections of the work of Degas, Rembrandt and Picasso, a gallery of Asian sculpture, and paintings by Gogh, Raphael, Manet, Cézanne, Van Gogh, Matisse, Kandinsky, and many other important artists.

Fantastic accessories

By J.M. Richards

RICCARDO DALISI:
Gaudí Furniture
144pp. Academy Editions. £10.50.
0 35670 622 1

Buried deep in Riccardo Dalisi's almost impenetrable text are some acute observations about Antoni Gaudí y Cornet's peculiar genius as revealed in the accessories of his buildings, "furniture" being used in this instance to mean much more than chairs and tables; it includes iron gates and grilles, chimneys and ventilation shafts and those sinuous concrete benches faced with a mosaic of broken tiles that every architectural pilgrim to Barcelona remembers as outlining the terraces of the Parque Güell.

Professor Dalisi's approach to Gaudí, though nominally that of an architect, is by way of anthropology, philosophy and psychology, the last reflecting the author's obvious interest in Freudian symbolism. None of these subjects lends itself to clarity of language at the best of times, but the reader has to study so hard to get at the author's meaning that he is bound to ask himself how the vagaries of this publication came about. Professor Dalisi teaches advanced architectural composition at the University of Naples. *Gaudí Furniture* was designed and printed in Italy and first published there two years ago, presumably in Italian. No translator is named and the reader can only assume that Dalisi has written the English version himself. This was unwise. Sentences like "Form is conceived as a synthesis whose finality is not external to itself in its pure function and in its autogenesis" and "Not only in his furnishings is functionally contained in an imperious morphological domination" are hard on the reader whether they rise from poor translation or from an insecure command of English. As well as his language, some of Dalisi's scholarly references are very odd. Can there really be a group of "famous" contemporary Italian designers called Picket, Solinas, Mari, Misklink Link, Poesi and Mendini?

If his text is persevered with it becomes clear that Dalisi has made some attempt to place Gaudí in a historical context, but he surprisingly fails to relate his achievements to those of the Catalan Renaissance of which Gaudí was essentially a part, although the most remarkable part. His development cannot be considered separately from that of the other architects of the Catalan movement like Lluís Domènech y Montaner, whose sculptured decorations, with their strange subterranean motifs, closely parallel several of Gaudí's, or Francesc Berenguer, Gaudí's collaborator who made most of the drawings for the Sagrada Família. Domènech's and Gaudí's mid ironwork, moreover, is inseparable from the rise of the Catalan metallurgical industry, one of the inspirations of the movement.

Nor can the character of much of Gaudí's work, his ironwork and interior designs especially, be understood apart from the Art Nouveau movement that was pervading Europe in his time and promptly reached Catalonia as the streets of Barcelona bear witness. The link with Hector Guimard is especially obvious and could usefully have been discussed. The resemblance of Guimard's Humbert de Romans auditorium in Paris (built 1897, demolished 1905) to some of Gaudí's interiors cannot be just coincidence. And this leads on to a more fundamental question: how aware was Gaudí of the theoretical and structural researches of Viollet-le-Duc? Dalisi provides no answer.

Whatever the deficiencies of the writing, *Gaudí Furniture* can nevertheless be highly valued as a collection of pictures. The book is elegant to look at and moderately priced. By no means all Gaudí's furniture is included but the examples Dalisi has chosen are more fully recorded here than in any previous publication. They are photographed close-up and from all angles, on some pages in colour. They are also shown in drawings, which the author calls "graphic interpretations". These, he explains in his introduction, are the work of young Neoplatonist architects, students and painters commissioned by him. They are the best things in the book, revealing the essence of each object depicted and providing an invaluable geometrical analysis.

Gaudí's furniture well repays such detailed study. The photographs and drawings show for example how the famous Casa Calvet and Casa Belló wooden chairs, in

which are combined a scientific instinct for ergonomics with an organic subtlety of form, respond to the structural nature of their material at the same time as they exploit it sculpturally. The legs curve and twist like the rows of a tree; the joints and the ends of the arms become knuckle-like knobs that demand to be appreciated by feel as well as by the eye. The Belló small chair is, I suppose, the most remarkable of Gaudí's furniture designs; of many others included here the dressing-table for the Palácio Güell is a particular delight. All reflect the same qualities of fantasy and originality, and the same intellectual logic, as the buildings for which they were designed. Dalisi rightly emphasizes Gaudí's practice of giving verbal rather than graphic instructions to his craftsmen, a reversal to an earlier day that makes his perhaps the last significant furniture before serial production took over.

Gaudí Furniture is a fascinating picture book, but even when it is regarded as no more than that, complaints must still be made about its make-up. The pictures seem to be arranged according to no system and with only a vague relationship to the text. There is no list of illustrations, so that a second look at any piece of furniture means leafing through the whole book to find it. There is no index. And there is one other surprising omission: the book concludes with a biographical note which tells us the place where Gaudí was born but not the year (it was 1852), and that he died in Barcelona in 1926 "the victim of an accident". In fact he was run over by a tram, an occurrence that one would have expected Professor Dalisi, with his fondness for symbolism, to have made much of.



A contemporary vignette of Gaudí which is reproduced in the book reviewed here.

Metropolitan lines

By Peter Howell

GAVIN STAMP and COLIN AMERY:
Victorian Buildings of London
1837-1887
An Illustrated Guide
175pp. Architectural Press. £12.95.
0 35139 500 7

This fascinating and eccentric book describes 101 London buildings erected between 1837 and 1887, of which ninety-five are still with us, while the remainder (five) are surrounded with black borders form an obituary section. "Building" is interpreted generously so that whole groups such as Harrow School and Kew Gardens count as one.

The selection could scarcely be described as unbiased; although it includes a vinegar warehouse, a pumping station, an orphan asylum and a market, it favours churches (a third of the total), especially High Anglican ones. As the authors claim to have based their choice on architectural merit, this is not entirely unreasonable; but they also claim to offer a representative collection, so that at least one example of a good Nonconformist chapel might have been included (though Waterhouse's remarkable Lyndhurst Road Congregational Church squeezes in with St Stephen's, Royston Hill).

The amazing thing about the book, however, is just how much it contains, so that it hardly seems fair to point out omissions. Of course the great public buildings are here—the Palace of Westminster, South Kensington, the Law Courts, even Westminster Abbey and St Paul's—but there are all kinds

of out-of-the-way treasures hardly known even to the expert. St Francis's, Pottery Lane, for example, or the Sacred Heart Convent, Hammersmith, and Sunningdale, Sydenham—all works of J. F. Bentley, whose Westminster Cathedral falls outside the scope of the book.

Illustrations are generously supplied, mostly small but well produced, deliberately chosen so as to avoid the obvious, and including an intriguing medley of drawings, engravings, and old photographs, often showing designs different from those actually erected. The photographs are all dated—a laudable practice. There are two plans, and a neat introduction. The double volume of the gazetteer are packed with detailed information, anecdotes, and forthright opinions. Not surprisingly, the obituary section is rich in pungent denunciations, whether of the forward-looking restlessness of BR's management or of dons—"the worst of vandals, combining naïveté with intellectual superiority and an unshakable conviction of the importance of their own priorities and the excellence of their own taste".

The authors are so refreshingly independent in their judgments that it comes as a surprise to find them repeating an unjustified orthodoxy, as when they quote Pevsner's (but surely they mean Nairn's?) denigration of Decimus Burton's Temperance House at Kew, by comparison with the earlier Palm House—a comparison which fails to take into account the very specific and entirely different brief to which Burton was working. Their misleading account of the authorship of the Palm House (Richard Turner deserves much more credit than Burton) is one of what seem to be strikingly few errors.

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Dealing with dynamics

By Roger Jones

BRUCE COLE:

Stanesco Paintings: From Its Origins to the Fifteenth Century. 241pp. 110 black-and-white illustrations. 5 pages in colour. Harper and Row, £12.50. 0 06 339911 1

Stanesco and the Art of Early Renaissance Florence, intended as a general history of Florentine painting c1375-1430 for the "student or general interested reader" and aiming to convey "a feeling for the stylistic dynamics of the crucial decades", would have been more appropriately entitled "Masaccio, Donatello and late gothic art in Florence". Although in his opening words Bruce Cole describes himself as "one concerned with the art of the Renaissance", the word "Renaissance" is not further used except once where it is described, properly as a "stylistically vague term".

The author's reluctance to oblige the venerable location is the sign not so much of a desire for methodological precision as of a rejection of many traditionally held views about the cultural history of the period, views which have given it its name. Gone is the antiquarian notion that the renewal of the visual arts in early fifteenth-century Florence had much to do with the passion of interest shown by many of its distinguished practitioners in the culture of the ancient world. True, this phenomenon is less clearly demonstrable in painting than in other fields and one should not carp at simplifying omissions in such a brief survey as the book under review, but to characterize the "stylistic dynamics" of the work of Donatello and Ghiberti (here treated at some length) without reference to this theme will surely mislead general readers. It is at any rate perverse to ask the reader to find the exquisitely Gothic hall of the Madonna by Lorenzo Monaco similar to that of the Madonna in the classicizing sculpted "Annunciation" group in the Duomo museum.

Cole, too, is the idea that Masaccio developed in painting a scientific approach to the representation of visual appearances, comparable to the exactitude then sought in other disciplines like philosophy or history. Many may sympathize with Professor Cole's evident lack of interest in the modern literature on perspective, but few will agree that Masaccio's own interest was in a "so-called scientific aspect of picture-making." It is unwise to under-estimate the mathematical concerns of an artist who could spend a whole day's work on the exact foreshortening of a capital, as Masaccio did repeatedly in the "Trinity". And it is not surprising that Cole admits to being baffled by the work. The mathematical precision we find in the "Trinity" was, of course, made possible by (and in this case may even be due to) the genius of Brunelleschi, who had demonstrated his discovery of perspective in two flat paintings. The author surprisingly does not mention these facts and the unformed reader will come to know Brunelleschi as a minor sculptor and architect only. Of Alberti he will hear nothing.

Clearly, we are being offered an unusual view of early quattrocento Florence. It is one which develops a thesis of Cole's earlier monograph on Agnolo Gaddi, that Gaddi and his generation have been undervalued, particularly in regard to their influence on Masaccio's generation. There are two difficulties. One is that the influence would be a delayed one, the era of Lorenzo Monaco intervening. The other, more serious, is that Cole, reasonably if rather insistently, characterizes the art of Gaddi and his contemporaries in terms of a return to the style of Giotto, but he does not squarely confront the traditional view that Masaccio's achievement is in part due to a direct rethinking of that of the grand old man himself, rather than to the influence of his late quattrocento followers.

Professor Cole is encouraged in his view by the element of continuity he finds in the

tradition of Florentine painting, arising from the way artists were trained in workshops to imitate the style of the master. In fact he is so convinced of the power of this continuity that he feels able to assess the degree of originality shown by lost works (ie, the unsuccessful entries in the competition of 1401). The revolutionary Masaccio famously tests this rule. Even with the help of the controversial S. Giovanni triptych (here blithely described as a "known work by Masaccio"). It is not possible to suggest a specific teacher, and in a discussion of the stylistic idioms to which Masaccio "must have been susceptible" we are offered the following as some kind of positive result: "Of course, the fact that he was not influenced by Lorenzo Monaco demonstrates that he did not accept them all indiscriminately." Donatello, too, presents difficulties. Fortunately, the early David can readily be seen as the product of someone who had worked with Ghiberti. After that, "the chain reaction of his own style propelled him forward."

Cole's method of accounting for style is not, however, limited to the detection of influences from other artists and to meta-, even nuclear physics. We are given wider cultural explanations. From one so sceptical of the powerfully argued thesis of Milford Meiss about the effects on art of the Black Death we have a right to expect something more than the banal circularities here presented. Why did Donatello and Masaccio produce "more immediate religious images"? "Something in society had suddenly created a need for more realistic accessible representation." This something arises from a vintage Burckhardian "newfound attitude towards man", cautiously qualified so that we hear of the newly self-assertive individuals seeking "at least a certain amount of immortality".

The quality of historical argument is not of a standard that should be offered to students as a model. Nor is it, fortunately, the author's main concern, and the bulk of the book is given over to a series of descriptive "ekphrastic" analyses of individual paintings which is often inelegant, sometimes wildly wrong and frequently sensible, and may be of value in encouraging readers, unfashionably, to consider them as narratives.

Stanesco painting from its origins to the fifteenth century is similar in character. It is more orthodox as to the overall general picture, though again a reevaluation of the late trecento is urged, very briefly and not persuasively. Both volumes, unusually, devote considerable space to the difficult task of writing about the use of colour. Much is said about the "palette" achieved by individual painters, but the language used is not sufficiently developed to convey a great deal to general readers, who might perhaps have been better served by an account of the cost and availability of particular colours and the iconographic conventions which in part resulted from them. Such knowledge is indispensable for a full appreciation of, say, Christ in Duccio's "Maestà".

The black-and-white illustrations are generally of high quality and there are extensive and useful bibliographical notes.

Helen Philon's *Early Islamic Ceramics from the Benaki Museum Athens* (376pp. Sotheby Porke Bernet Publications/Philip Wilson Publishers, £35. 0 85667 098 7) is the first volume in the Benaki Museum's catalogue of Islamic Art. The period covered is from the ninth century to the late twelfth century. Of the 2,000 examples of Islamic ceramics of this period collected by Antony Benaki, 648 were chosen for publication. Helen Philon has arranged the fragments and complete vessels typologically in respect of their place of discovery. The pieces are all illustrated (there are 1,416 black-and-white illustrations and 141 two-colour) and there are drawings showing the profiles of the original vessels where these can be told from the remaining shards. The standard of reproduction is high and the clarity with which the volume has been designed will make this book a valuable publication.



A portrait by John Macnure Hamilton of the famous physicist John Tyndall (1820-1893). Fellow of the Royal Society (1852) and the Society's Rutherford Medalist in 1864 for his study of the action of gases and vapours on radiant heat, from The Royal Society Catalogue of Portraits reviewed opposite.

Dating the developments

Ronald Pickvance

JAN HULSKER:

The Complete Van Gogh Paintings, Drawings, Sketches. 2170 illustrations, including 40 in colour. 498 pp. Phaidon, £45. 0 7148 2028 8

If all Van Gogh's paintings and drawings were somehow to disappear, his letters would still remain a complete reading, and we would have a faint record of all the sketches given of them there. Yet those letters, though translated into many languages, are not yet fully collected, despite the so-called Complete Letters, published in the late 1950s. There is still the need to arrange them to correct chronological sequence and to date each letter as precisely as possible. (Van Gogh rarely dated his letters, and the envelopes have disappeared.) One Dutch devotee of Van Gogh, Jan Hulsker, has spent the last twenty-five years in this formidable task, and his patient researches have considerably increased our knowledge of Van Gogh's work.

Even with this achievement, and his service on the Dutch committee of scholars who prepared the third edition (1970) of De la Falie's pioneering *catalogue raisonné* of Van Gogh's paintings and drawings, Dr Hulsker has found time for the ambitious project of producing a complete chronology of all the surviving paintings, drawings and sketches.

Van Gogh produced approximately 850 paintings, 850 drawings, and wrote about 800 letters. In addition he made more than 200 sketches in those letters, while an unknown quantity of sketchbook drawings exist—some, indeed, are already known from disassembled pages, and parts of others have been published. De la Falie, in his catalogue, treated the paintings and drawings separately (but included the sketches in letters), and catalogued each period. In the letters, the works lost those which he identified with descriptions or sketches in the letters, and those not so documented. The result was a discontinuous and incomplete chronology. In the various editions of the letters, not all the sketches have been reproduced.

In Hulsker's new book (a translation of the Dutch edition first published in 1977), the gaps are immediately obvious. Van Gogh's development can now be traced as an organic whole. The sketchbook drawings, however, he has not brought up to date; the early letters, drawing, of a marsh (no. 8) has been in the National Gallery of Canada since 1968;

and Auvers are easily observed. The result is a catalogue of 2,126 works, each illustrated in black-and-white, with an accompanying text, which is part biography, part quotation from letters, part account of Van Gogh's stylistic development.

But does it really present "the complete Van Gogh"? Hulsker admits that his aim was "to provide a clear and comprehensive picture of Vincent Van Gogh's path as an artist", with illustrations of "virtually all his drawings and paintings". So not everything is here. Indeed, there are no deliberate editorial exclusions: there is no attempt to assemble works done before April 1881—that is to say, before Etten. The juvenilia, the first drawings in the Dordrecht, the first studies in Brussels are excluded. Moreover, other sheets, numbered by De la Falie, are excluded because they "show only the unfinished first draft of a drawing or a few barely decipherable scribbles". Still other works are rejected by Hulsker as not authentic, even though some of them were included in the 1970 edition of De la Falie's catalogue. It would have been useful to have had these listed in a footnote. Hulsker has "added a few works that have since come to light and have been identified as authentic" but, again, which are they? Finally, he has added a number of hitherto unpublished drawings from a Benaki sketchbook. What about other sketchbooks from other periods?

In fact, the book falls considerably short of its title's major implication—that all Van Gogh's works are here brought together. But perhaps it is "complete" in another sense, as the work of reference? The individual entries give title, De la Falie number, medium, size and owner, but not reference to the letters, nor provenance, nor exhibition history. For this information, the interested reader must return to De la Falie.

Text and illustrations are arranged by chronological sequence of places from Etten to Auvers. Sometimes the text lags irritatingly behind the illustrations; it is often too biographical and literary—there are unnecessary quotations from letters, and excessive reliance, in the Paris chapter, on secondary sources like Hartick and Gertzi.

There is a concordance of De la Falie and Hulsker numbers, but no index of collectors, past or present. There is a surprisingly high percentage of works whose location is unknown, and establishing an authentic oeuvre. Dr Hulsker has contributed much to this campaign. His latest book will be an indispensable aid to any serious study of Van Gogh; but it is not the last word.

the drawing, "Sorrow" (no 130) is in the Walsall Art Gallery and the drawing of a Montmartre windmill (no 1185) in the Phillips Collection, Washington.

There is one tantalizing question: what was Van Gogh's last painting? There was a time when it was thought to be "Crows over a Wheatfield". The turbulent, cataclysmic landscape, with its startling spatial disruptions, its agitated brushstrokes and the sombre and haunting presence of crows, was construed as a clear reflection of the inner torment which led to the painter's suicide. But a more attentive perusal of the letters would seem to show that "Crows over a Wheatfield" was not the last painting. A more objective viewing of the painting via its vls in itself and format—a double square—may lessen the sense of torment.

A case has also been made for considering "Ombigu's Garden" as the last painting, (also a double-square format), that opens up a whole new field both to historians and to collectors. Until now the history of the British initial after the end of the period covered in *Medallist's History of British History to the death of George III* has been only fitfully illuminated in tentative requests such as H. Orrester's *British Portrait Medals after 1760* and M. H. Grant's list of *British Medals 1760-1837*. As a result medallist material has remained largely inaccessible to non-specialists and even the most dedicated students and collectors have remained uncomfortably ignorant about the circumstances in which particular pieces were issued.

Brown's book does much to right this state of affairs. It is not and would not claim to be a true continuation of *Medallist's History* since, for quite understandable reasons, he has felt able to include less than half of the medals produced during the period and to illustrate less than a quarter of those included. Despite this the resulting selection of 1,755 medals will be valuable, not only to those interested in medals for their own sake, but also to students of the period in almost any field. Even after the author's decision to exclude most medals of individuals not mentioned in the DNB, his work still includes over one thousand portraits, scarcely more than a tenth of which are listed in the National Portrait Gallery's *Dictionary of British Portraits*. The catalogue also informs us of which public collections they are to be found, although it should be noted that many more of them are in the British Museum than Brown indicates.

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ART

Fellows in their finery

By Peter Greenham

NORMAN H. ROBINSON:

The Royal Society Catalogue of Portraits. 343pp. The Royal Society, 6 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1. £25. 0 85403 1367

Painting a portrait can bring out the best in an artist: look at what Sir Richard Bury did for Lord Leighton, or Charles Keene for himself. One of the memorable possessions of the Royal Society is a portrait of Richard Price by Benjamin West, the American who was twice President of the Royal Academy. It is hard to believe that it is by the man who painted the lofty, vacuous imitation of Titian in the Diploma Oeuvre of the Royal Academy. The pair is dry and spare, there is no sumptuous fustian, no flurry, no pose; but a fustian doll, sliding out of the frame and slipping past the bookcase which is meant to arrest him. The skin is drawn right over the bones; the vivacity and strength of the face could make him a subject fit for a novel. And of course the wig looks as if it could be taken off and put on again.

So do all the wigs in the modest portraits by little known painters, for instance the fine Maitre Chamberlain of Samuel Chandler, or Paul Smearon by nobody knows whom. The wigs in the grander portraits of Sir Godfrey Kneller and Sir Peter Lely are like rich extensions of the sitter's hair. Perhaps that is the reason why it is hard to guess what they are like; for their wigs make them all benign and opulent, with the smallest of mouths and the nobles of pouches under the eyes; brows shorn or gathered, as if pondering what it was that made them undertake to spend so

many hours in the company of a man unused to polite conversation. The Lawrence, like the Knellers, might be of soldiers and statesmen: the sitters are confident, their coats are thrown heroically open. But for the cheerful, unworried Fellows the lesser known artists does best.

Learned societies made little use of Reynolds or Gainsborough or Sargent. Blenheim Palace was the nearest Sargent got with his brushes to a university. No doubt the members of the Royal Society discussed the merits of one painter and another before choosing. It is usually done by little committees which come and sit uneasily in the painter's studio while he as uneasily drags out his canvases, unwilling to confess that the only one they like was done thirty years ago; both parties wondering with what sort of grace they can bring the meeting to a close. Perhaps the fashionable artist was not only too dear, but was too easy in his manner. Yet, however far away the artist is from courts and galleries, the change of style hit upon by his betters will soon affect him.

The difference between the earlier portraits at the Royal Society (not the very earliest) and the later shows what the artist—or the patron—has lost and what he has gained. Two hundred years ago, a tradition was still in use which enabled an artist to dispose the head and the two hands in a satisfying pattern. The Victorians had intimations of loss; you only have to look from Lely's Lord Brouncker, so beautifully composed that he must have used some rule, to the architects' desk, to John Collier's clumsy and resolute display of Hudley's portrait, to see that a proper hand in relation to the face may seem in the later portraits and especially the later, even ones as considered as Gerald Kelly's, to be haphazard; but there is the refreshment that comes from paint ridged put on the freedom which the Victorians often

achieved in their sketches and were at pains to smooth and smother in their pictures for exhibition.

With the richer paint, the more active brush, darting and dipping along the folds and piling up its trophies, goes a more fleshy substance as well as a sense of intimacy. In contrast to the glances of a man who knows his place in society goes a certain inward look, as if the sitters were more on their own, and more on their guard, sometimes indeed more on their dignity. They do not smile much. Scientists have a frank regard, not deprecatory of themselves, but not boastful (though two of the frankest and most modest of the Fellows turn out to be clergymen elected for some unscientific reason). They have, too, an innocence, which the professional portrait painter like Sir Thomas Lawrence supplies with looks of heroic affability, not least in the one of Sir Humphrey Davy: a splendid declamation, as it were, instead of a confidence, delivered with the other kind of confidence which came from doing justice to such splendid figures as Plus VII and Cardinal Consalvi, the memory of whom puts these portraits of the Royal Society in the shade, a calm and honourable place.

The Royal Society's Librarian has perhaps unintentionally chosen the colour reproductions in such a way that this book underlines the superiority of the eighteenth-century portraits. The colours are more brilliant than the originals because they were photographed under a much stronger light than Carlton House Terrace admits. It is clear that the paintings are well cared for there. The notes on the Fellows are full but concise; taken altogether they make up a short history of scientific progress. To have had a note on the portrait painters would no doubt have been too much. One of the best portraits is by John Macnure Hamilton. Who was he? What else did Fiddes-Watson paint, besides the fine portraits of J. J. Thomson?

History in the round

By Mark P. Jones

LAURENCE BROWN:

A Catalogue of British Historical Medals Volume I, 1760-1837. 469pp. 406 illustrations. Seaby Publications, £45. 0 90052 56 X

Laurence Brown's *A Catalogue of British Historical Medals* is one of those rare publications that open up a whole new field both to historians and to collectors. Until now the history of the British initial after the end of the period covered in *Medallist's History of British History to the death of George III* has been only fitfully illuminated in tentative requests such as H. Orrester's *British Portrait Medals after 1760* and M. H. Grant's list of *British Medals 1760-1837*. As a result medallist material has remained largely inaccessible to non-specialists and even the most dedicated students and collectors have remained uncomfortably ignorant about the circumstances in which particular pieces were issued.

Brown's book does much to right this state of affairs. It is not and would not claim to be a true continuation of *Medallist's History* since, for quite understandable reasons, he has felt able to include less than half of the medals produced during the period and to illustrate less than a quarter of those included. Despite this the resulting selection of 1,755 medals will be valuable, not only to those interested in medals for their own sake, but also to students of the period in almost any field. Even after the author's decision to exclude most medals of individuals not mentioned in the DNB, his work still includes over one thousand portraits, scarcely more than a tenth of which are listed in the National Portrait Gallery's *Dictionary of British Portraits*. The catalogue also informs us of which public collections they are to be found, although it should be noted that many more of them are in the British Museum than Brown indicates.

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documentary as well as an illustrative value. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as now, medals recorded the enormous popular interest in great formal occasions, from royal weddings to the funerals of great public figures. But, along with political tokens (which were unfortunately largely excluded) they also fulfilled a role similar in that now occupied by badges, providing an instant comment on the issues of the day. As such they give us fascinating evidence of public reaction to contemporary events. Some of this, like the extent of medallist response to the French Revolution or to the campaign for parliamentary reform, is predictable. But the total absence of response to other great events, such as the American War of Independence, when compared to the enthusiasm shown on relatively obscure occasions, such as the capture of Saint Eustatius or George III's recovery from illness in 1789 can be surprising. The excellent historical notes which follow each entry are of the greatest use, explaining not only the context in which medals were issued, but also, where possible, how they were marketed, so making it possible to form some idea about the sort and size of public to which such pieces appealed.

With the help of this book it is possible not only to relate particular medals to particular events but also, for the first time, to see how the role of medals changed over the period: in question. Early in George III's reign they ceased to be considered as official art; even so, as in 1789 or at the Jubilee celebrations of 1809-10, large numbers of medals of the King did appear. They were almost invariably the product of private initiative. Even the great events of the Napoleonic period failed to change this situation and it was left to an adventurer called Mudlo to be left a series of "National Medals" in 1820 which were intended to rival the great official Napoleonic series issued in France under the direction of Vivant Donon.

Official neglect, however, failed to drive the medal into decline. On the contrary, popular demand was such that annual production in the 1830s was five times that of the 1760s. Such an increase naturally provided increased opportunities for medallists. For the first time Gruber's assertion,

in the introduction to *Medallist's History*, that "the history of English medallists is in a great degree the history of the medallists of other countries" ceases to hold good. Art historians concerned with the period may be surprised to discover a whole school of artists, competent in the production both of portraits and of figure compositions, whose names are scarcely known outside the covers of Forster's *Biographical Dictionary of Medallists*, and a few such as William Wyon or Benedetto Pistrucci, whose work deserves to be much better known. Unfortunately Mr Brown shows little interest in this side of medallist history.

The decision not to record the signatures on medals, combined with an almost total absence of discussion of the reasons for attributing a particular medal to a particular artist, makes it hard for the reader to know how far to accept the catalogue's statements about authorship. Entry No 1742, for example, attributes a medal for Princess Victoria's majority to W. H. Holbrook and William Wyon. Since the piece is not illustrated the reader can have no idea why this should be so, unless, that is, he can get hold of an example of the medal in which case he will see that it is signed W. H. He still could not be certain that this is the basis for the attribution, but if it is, it is a bad one. The signature is more likely to be that of William Woodhouse than of William Wyon, who created another and far superior medal for the same occasion which has unfortunately been omitted from the catalogue.

Such minor failings should not, however, be allowed to obscure the real magnitude of Laurence Brown's achievement and certainly will not stop it becoming a bible for collectors and the basis for all future research on British medals of this period.

Europe and America from the Colonial Era to today. By Victoria Kloss Ball (442pp. Chichester: John Wiley, £25.00. 0 471 05161 6) is the second of two volumes on Architecture and Interior Design. The first volume dealt with the subject up to seventeenth-century European Baroque. The second volume continues the examination, focusing on a number of historic buildings and contents and describing the characteristic styles of the seventeenth-century colonialization in America.

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